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ABSTRACT

This collection contains 75 papers or summaries presented at a 1999 conference on self-study and institutional improvement for institutions of higher education. Papers are grouped into these chapters (with sample topics in parentheses): (1) "Case Studies in Collaboration: Culture of Collaboration" (cooperation; partnerships in education); (2) "Case Studies in Collaboration: Learning Resources" (institutional cooperation; technology use); (3) "Case Studies in Collaboration: Collaboration with Industry/Employers" (partnerships with industry); (4) "Case Studies in Collaboration: Articulation Agreements, Contracts, and Academic Programs" (models for cooperation); (5) "Case Studies in Collaboration: International Education" (international educational partnerships); (6) "Case Studies in Collaboration: Partnerships with Schools" (university-school cooperation); (7) "Program Review" (program evaluation); (8) "General Education/Critical Thinking" (critical thinking in the undergraduate experience); (9) "Assessment of Student Academic Achievement" (student evaluation); (10) "The Role of Institutional Planning in Collaboration and Self-Study" (strategic planning and evaluation); (11) "Coordinating the Self-Study Process" (evaluation for accreditation); (12) "Self-Study and Evaluation: Practical Advice" (technology; educational improvement); and (13) "Coordinating Special Types of Evaluations" (focused visits; accreditation planning). Most papers contain references. (SLD)

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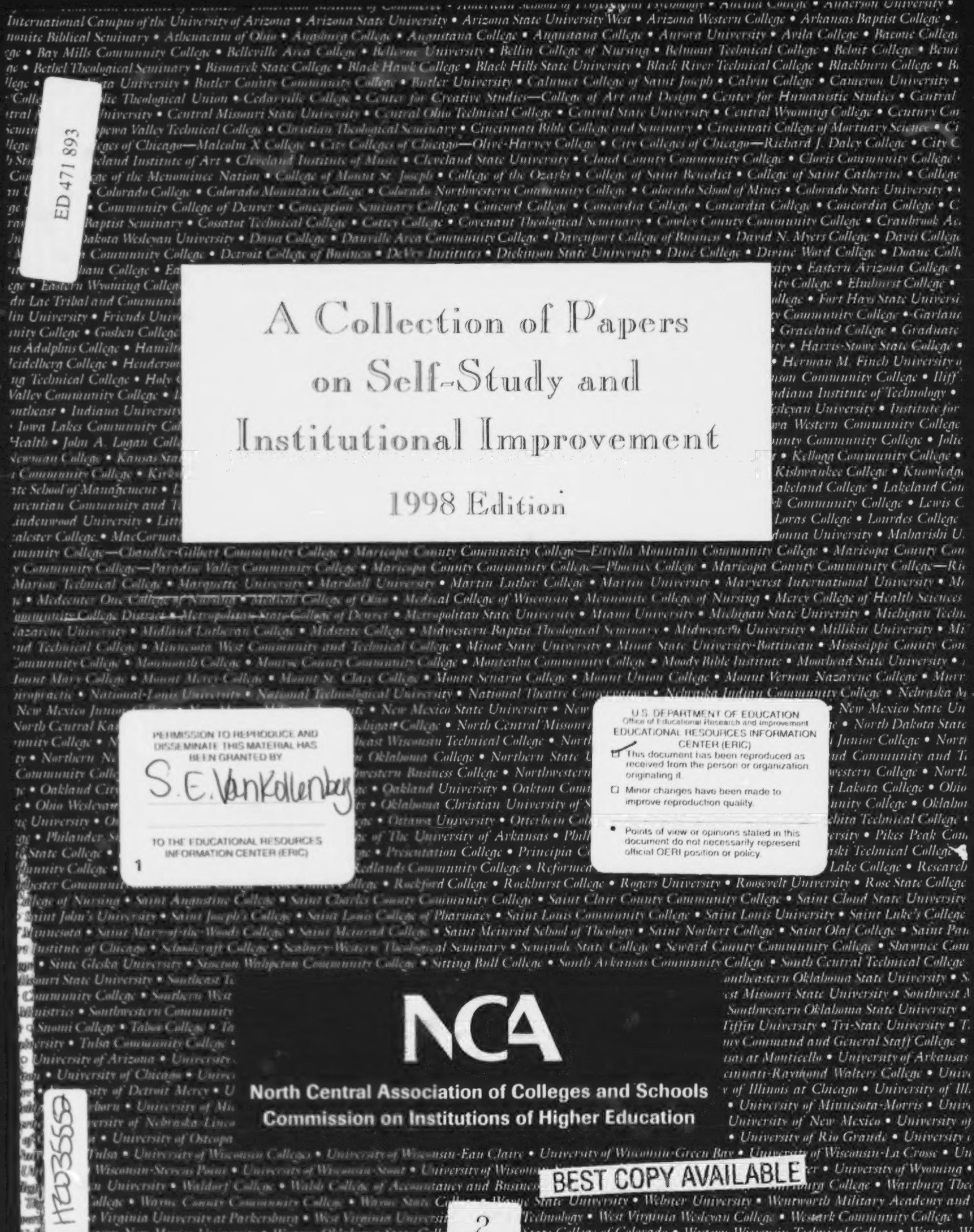

A Collection of Papers on Self-Study and Institutional Improvement

1998 Edition

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A Collection of Papers on Self-Study and Institutional Improvement

1998

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Prepared for the program of the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
at the 103rd Annual Meeting of the
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
March 28-31, 1998 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

THE Collaborative Imperative

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

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The papers included in this collection offer the viewpoints of their authors. The Commission highly recommends them for study and for the advice they contain, but none represent official Commission directions, rules, or policies.

Susan E. Van Kollenburg, Editor

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Foreword

For years the Commission's Annual Meeting has been an exercise in collaboration. This 103rd Annual Meeting continues the tradition: experienced Self-Study Coordinators mentor people new to the Coordinator role; experienced Consultant-Evaluators share what they have learned with other Consultant-Evaluators, including those new to the Corps; and scores of people come from their campuses to Chicago to share information about a variety of aspects of institutional life, including planning, assessment, library resources, and general education. The short papers all of these participants provide for this volume represent yet another extraordinarily valuable method of collaboration.

Two years before the millennium, the "Collaborative Imperative" in higher education is about much more than the sharing of knowledge of the Commission's requirements and Criteria for Accreditation and effective evaluation through peer review. The imperative is for institutions of higher education to develop new forms of collaborative decision-making; to find ways to share resources and programs between and among institutions; and to bridge the gaps between varieties of types of educational institutions, between educational institutions and other agencies and corporations, and between nations. Several of the papers in this volume describe and evaluate these new collaborative ventures.

At this important turning point in the history of higher education in the United States, collaboration must occur between the Commission and its affiliated institutions. This Annual Meeting, and many of these papers prepared by those who will breath life into the Meeting, is dedicated to that collaboration. Our plenary sessions challenge both institutions and this accrediting association to look to the future; our presenters tell the Commission of new and exciting things happening in the reshaping of higher education; and our Committee on Organizational Effectiveness and Future Directions begins to lay our a map for the Commission's efforts to participate effectively in this new change. The need for quality assurance and quality improvement does not go away in the new world of higher education. Therefore voluntary accreditation continues to have a role to play in it. But a collaborative effort is required to develop the new tools of evaluation demanded by the new environments through which students learn and have their learning validated. Many of these papers invite the Commission to enter a new collaborative endeavor to ensure the quality of higher education in the next century.

Steven D. Crow
Executive Director

March 29, 1998

Preface

On behalf of the Commission, I am pleased to present the fourteenth edition of the *Collection of Papers on Self-Study and Institutional Improvement.*

The theme of the 1998 Annual Meeting theme is "The Collaborative Imperative." Many of the papers address this theme in relation to such areas as institutional culture; learning resources; relations with industry; agreements with other educational institutions, including the schools; international education; planning; and institutional self-study. For those involved in self-study, the *Collection of Papers* goes beyond the policies and procedures provided in the *Handbook of Accreditation,* to give advice based on actual experience.

The purpose of these papers is to supplement the oral presentations at the Annual Meeting. It is our hope in providing them that they will enhance the learning experience for those attending the Meeting. We are grateful to the speakers for their willingness to share their experience with others through this volume, in addition to their presentations at the Annual Meeting.

The Commission invites your comments about the *Collection of Papers,* and welcomes your suggestions for future topics for the Annual Meeting program.

Susan E. Van Kollenburg
Editor
Associate Director of Programs, Publications,
and Member Services

March 29, 1998

Chapter 1

NCA

Case Studies in Collaboration:

Culture of Collaboration

THE Collaborative Imperative

103rd Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
March 28-31, 1998 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

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The Heartland Community College Saga: The Development and Implementation of Organizational Values

Jonathan M. Astroth
Valerie R. Roberson
Girard W. Weber

Introduction

Burton Clark described an organizational saga as "a collective understanding of unique accomplishment in a formally established group." (Clark 1972) He referred to the two stages in the development of an organizational culture as initiation and fulfillment. Because Heartland Community College is the newest community college in Illinois, it is difficult to define what elements of the culture developed thus far will endure to become a saga. However, several common beliefs, accepted standards, and unique accomplishments form the current culture and give the organization character.

As the newest and probably the last community college in Illinois, Heartland began with an expectation to be innovative and different, despite being a member of an established state community college system. The College was founded by a relatively young president and two vice presidents. Working with the board of trustees, this small group was largely responsible for developing the institutional mission, policies, and values–in short, the institution's ethos. Like the president and vice presidents, many of the earliest staff hired had community college experience and joined Heartland for the opportunity to fashion a new institution.

As the College began operation, innovation shaped not only its delivery of instruction and support services, but also its view of roles and relationships within and beyond the organization. The saga of Heartland is in part this innovative view of roles and relationships, expressed most notably in a written statement of organizational values. This organizational values document has become one of the most pervasive early innovations of the College. Collectively, the values have encouraged a culture of student orientation, public accountability, and people-centeredness. Additionally, they have guided decision-making during the College's rapid growth.

General Image of the College

One of the strongest images of Heartland derives from the organizational values document created by the president and the vice presidents in the earliest days of the College. In one page, twelve principles are listed and followed by an illustrative quotation from a famous individual. The document is referred to regularly and is well known within the organization. It is discussed and quoted on a regular basis by employees at all levels of the organization. Although some of the principles are better known than others, it is the document itself that captures the imagery of the College. In the opinion of many, it stands for a concern of management for maintaining a work environment in which individuals are valued as people and treated fairly. Some of the principles state this directly, while others imply it. In some ways the document symbolizes the ideal of how business is conducted and what people believe about how the organization functions.

One reason this document is so well known is that it is given to all employees in a packet of information they receive upon application to the College. Often a candidate will cite these during an interview and use them as a reason for seeking to join the organization. Search teams, which include employees from all levels and many areas of the College, reinforce for the candidate the ideas presented in the values document. Once the employee is hired, the values are generally discussed during orientation sessions, strengthening the expectation that they will be a real part of the working environment.

Some Specific Values of the College

In its original form, one of the most often quoted values is "we operate a casteless system of employment to the extent possible," (since changed to "we minimize distinctions among employee groups"). This value may be quoted the most because it is probably the one principle most implemented in practice. Examples of it abound. In an attempt to blur the distinctions between faculty and administrators, many faculty are given twelve month contracts and are required to take on some administrative tasks. By the same token, some administrators teach. All employees receive the same number of sick leave days and are paid on the same schedule. When new policies are instated, this is the one value that is most often used as a measure of fairness.

There are several other ways in which this value of *castelessness* is implemented within the institution. All academic divisions contain both transfer and career programs. Human resource policies are determined by a committee with representation from all employee groups. This committee approves hires, sets salaries, negotiates raises and benefits, and recommends modifications to personnel policy. Other committees, with representation from all employee groups, provide input on planning and budgeting, institutional quality improvement, and curriculum and academic standards. The president conducts campus meetings to explain decisions and answer questions. There is a general openness to discussion between all employees and the president, as well as between employees and their supervisors. The College also plans to maintain a flat organizational structure to keep bureaucratic layers minimal.

Though Heartland students may not be directly aware of the organizational values, they are affected by them indirectly. One value explicitly labels each student "a prize customer."

Another value states that Heartland strives to be a paperless society, but this has yet to become a reality. This value does, however, characterize an environment and culture with a strong dependence on technology and an expectation of computer literacy. For example, all meetings at Heartland are scheduled by computer. Sometimes a new employee thinks he can avoid using his computer and does not turn it on daily, only to be embarrassed to find that he has missed several meetings and appointments. Heartland, by circumstance, came into being at a time of rapid technological growth and change. As a result, Heartland was able to integrate uses of technology to a high degree and all faculty and staff are equipped with their own computers containing a variety of software.

Other values address innovation, teamwork, and even employee attitude. One statement often made by the president, "We are building the plane as we are flying it," describes the rapid pace and fast growth and development that characterize the institution. In the first five years, enrollment grew from 800 to more than 3,000 students. This rapid growth, coupled with the value of innovation, has meant almost constant change. Indeed, some people have left the organization because they did not like the pressures of the environment. Yet, despite a relatively short history, Heartland has established itself within the state by receiving competitive institutional awards and grants, by having faculty and staff selected to present at national and state conferences, and by having students win competitive academic awards.

Interpretation of the Values Within the College

As written statements, the organizational values depict an ideal, a lofty standard. Because they are explicit, the values also invite criticism, and the imagery of the saga at Heartland is seen differently by various groups within the institution. The cabinet, which at the time consisted of the president and two vice presidents, was the group that created the original document and the spirit surrounding it. The organizational values seem to embody the type of institution they wanted to create. Like many of the values, these men were idealistic. Yet, those remaining still seem to believe that these are worthy ideals, that they can create the environment they describe, and that these are appropriate standards for the organization.

Other people in the organization sometimes see the actions of the cabinet differently. Some faculty have referred to the organizational values glibly and have characterized them as ideals or concepts that do not fit their vision or experience of what the environment at the College is really like. Some faculty have indeed left when they perceived that these values were not, in practice, a reality. The faculty remaining seem to see the values as obtainable and understand that only through effort can these values become consistent reality.

Still other employees have a limited understanding of how these values should be operationalized. Administrators and professional staff other than the cabinet believe it their responsibility to implement the ideas of the values but often do not understand how to accomplish this task. Those lower in the organizational structure sometimes have difficulty interpreting the intent of the values and the boundaries of participatory management. They are not entirely to blame in this because the cabinet is not always in agreement on how the values translate into practice.

Conclusion

In the short years the College has existed, its culture has been influenced tremendously by the organizational values document. In a fall 1997 college-wide survey, respondents attached an extremely high level of importance to the values. On nine of 12 values, more than 90% of respondents rated the values at least 5 out of a possible 7 in importance. Respondents also rated the College above the mean on adherence to each value. Adherence scores for all values ranged from 3.65 to 5.28 out of a possible 7.

While it cannot be determined at this point how long the organizational values document will influence the culture and practices of Heartland, it is certain that all those who worked at Heartland during the early years know how it shaped the organizational culture and affected the interactions of its employees.

With each year, employees have noted how the College is becoming more "traditional." It may be that the Heartland saga, as based on new roles and relationships, may not last. If this saga does, however, move from initiation to fulfillment, a major reason will be the organizational values.

Reference

Clark, Burton. 1972. The organizational saga in higher education. *Administrative Science Quarterly.* 17(2): 178-84.

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Partnerships: Doors to the Future for Community Colleges

Norman Nielsen

Budgets shrivel and shrink. State support drops. Increasing numbers of students choose to begin college at two-year schools. Business and industry seek retraining opportunities for their employees and a better educated applicant pool. The community college is forced to downsize, postpone plant maintenance, and set aside plans for new programs. Details may differ and regional economic conditions determine when the struggles began, but the story is virtually the same nationwide.

The "easy out" for community colleges at this point is to behave as individuals and families sometimes do when they are hit by financial challenges: cut back on their life styles and suffer in silence. They take the attitude that "this too shall pass." With luck and patience, maybe a windfall or two, things will get better.

Operating in Partnerships as a Way of Life

It is time to develop a different attitude. First, community colleges must admit that this is not a short-term crisis. Financial challenges and shrinking support have become a way of life for all higher education. Demands are great and resources are limited. There is no reason to believe that a reviving economy will change that in the near future.

Kirkwood Community College conducted an institutional effectiveness study in 1990-91. One of the conclusions that this college reached, like many others in similar circumstances, was that we needed to emphasize strong partnerships with both public and private agencies to meet the growing challenge of the nineties.

Based on the results from implementing this recommendation over the past several years, Kirkwood makes this recommendation: find some friends. Call those friends partners. Then find more friends. Build partnerships while addressing the important needs in the community. Show those partners how useful the community college can be to them. Ask your partners to support the college both financially and organizationally.

Exploring the Full Range of Partnerships: Public and Private

When approaching partnerships, avoid the tendency to equate "partners" with "funders." While many partnerships involve a contribution of money to the college, those that entail an exchange of expertise, personnel, facilities, or other resources can be equally fruitful. A handful of examples of the virtually unlimited varieties of campus partnership arrangements is listed below.

◇ **Off-campus training and degree programs**

Community colleges in Michigan partner with the State of Michigan, Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, and the auto industry to offer the Michigan Virtual Automotive College, which integrates the automotive education and training offerings of Michigan's higher education providers with the support services needed to provide convenient, cost effective, and high-quality automotive education and training.

Other popular partnerships include the extensive credit educational offerings community colleges bring to local employers. For example, students can take Kirkwood credit courses on site at Amana Refrigeration and at AEGON USA; and Central Piedmont Community College, N.C., brings both live instructors and computer-based educational courseware to many area industries to improve employees' reading, writing, and math skills.

◇ Economic development activities

City, county, and industrial agencies are increasingly turning to community colleges for a variety of services to foster economic development in the community. For instance, Kirkwood Community College has joined with other community agencies to open a one-stop site for career testing, assessment, counseling, academic advising, and placement services. St. Louis Community College, Mo., works with Boeing to offer individualized skills testing and assessment for employees and job profiling for positions in the aerospace industry.

◇ Shared facilities with public agencies

Since many community colleges receive much, if not most, of their funding from county, state, or other local funding sources, they should maximize ties to other public agencies. Kirkwood is in the process of launching two such cooperative ventures. In Tipton, Iowa, Kirkwood partners with two other agencies with the common goal of preparing their clientele for further education and employment—a community-based sheltered workshop/rehabilitation program for moderately disabled adults and the Cedar County Alternative High School program. The facility houses Kirkwood's own high school completion program for adults and also provides office space and support services for other state- and community-based agencies such as JTPA, Vocational Rehabilitation, Work Force Development, and the Department of Human Services.

In downtown Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the Kirkwood Resource Center shares space with JTPA, Promise Jobs, Dislocated Worker, Workforce Development, Vocational-Rehabilitation, and other service agencies to serve more effectively a clientele directly affected by welfare reform. In addition, the Kirkwood Community College campus is home to the East Central Iowa Council of Government, the Heritage Agency on Aging, Bluestem Solid Waste Agency, and the Iowa State University Extension Service.

Belleville Area College, Ill., serves as the umbrella for an extensive county-wide program for senior citizens that centralizes educational and personal development opportunities, wellness, housing, and job and volunteer opportunities on the campus. This service draws more than 12,000 participants annually, and links hundreds of mature volunteers with dozens of public or non-profit agencies across the community.

◇ Inviting industry on campus

Housing business facilities on campus can create a synergistic relationship between colleges and area employers. At the Maricopa Community Colleges, Ariz., college officials share offices with personnel from Motorola Corporation and use their industry perspective when planning educational programs. Motorola, for its part, mandates a 70 hour per year continuing education requirement for all employees, and encourages workers to meet the obligation through relevant MCC classes.

Johnson County Community College (JCCC), Kans., is the site of the national training headquarters for Burlington-Northern Railroad. Burlington built a $3.5 million facility, complete with railroad simulator, on the campus, which will become JCCC's property after ten years of operation. BNR occupies two-thirds of the building for its training activities, while the college uses the other third for general purpose classrooms. Burlington recently built a second $6 million building that will revert to the college after a decade. Meanwhile, JCCC is developing an industry-wide railroad personnel associate degree program.

On the Kirkwood campus, AEGON USA built a $10 million corporate data center that not only handles its own data processing but provides Kirkwood with a state-of-the art computer training center. Also on campus, Diamond V Mills, a Cedar Rapids-based, nationally-marketed feed company, shares its $1.66 million nutrition research center with students in Kirkwood's animal science programs. Diamond V was also a partner in the construction of Kirkwood's Mansfield Swine Education Center, a $1.2 million state-of-the-art confinement facility that includes a fiber-optic classroom and satellite uplink capability, making it possible to offer continuing education classes to Iowa farmers. Other companies and agencies that partnered on the project include Pioneer Hi-Bred, Agri-King, Growmark, the Wallace Technology Transfer Foundation of Iowa, Firstar Banks, the Mansfield Trust, and the Iowa Pork Producers Association.

◇ Partnering with other schools

Kirkwood partners with Mt. Mercy College, a private, four-year school, to offer an accelerated business careers program designed for employed adults. Students earning a B. A. from Mt. Mercy in this program can transfer in five semesters of credit from Kirkwood rather than four, thus lowering total tuition costs. Courses are offered in accelerated five- and ten-week blocks and scheduled for evenings and weekends to meet the needs of motivated, prepared students.

◇ **National community college networking**

Other important partnerships involve community colleges working together cooperatively to share information, professional development, and educational programming.

Participation in the activities of organizations like the League for Innovation, the Community College Satellite Network, and the numerous specialized councils and consortia organized under the AACC umbrella allows community colleges across the country to pool their expertise and resources to produce the maximum benefit for all. Such national community college partnerships will become increasingly critical as demands for diverse programming grow, driving all colleges to borrow from each other to fill the gap they could not provide otherwise.

Criteria for a Strong Partnership Program

Experience demonstrates that the key to successful partnerships is first having strong college transfer, vocational, and community education programming. Partnerships flourish when colleges have built credibility within the community by offering quality education programs, using active advisor committees, building an outstanding faculty, and employing innovative outreach techniques. Working from this strong base, community colleges can more easily draw industries and public agencies into the network of partnerships.

Other points to keep in mind:

- The actions of publicly supported institutions are scrutinized by taxpayers. Educational values should not be compromised. The college should always be able to answer "Yes" to these questions: Is the potential partner reputable and financially stable with a positive public image? Does the proposed partnership match the needs and mission of the college? Do the financial arrangements serve the best interests of the college? Is the length of the proposed commitment appropriate and reasonable?
- When working with private sector partners, the project will proceed at their pace, which may be faster than that of a publicly accountable institution. To accommodate the need for rapid progress, boards of trustees must entrust the college administration to make day-to-day decisions. A trustworthy attorney who is willing to make decisions is also required for any innovative project.
- Early formation of an advisory committee and a survey of the interest and needs of area business and industry set the direction for all joint projects.
- Be a good partner. Ensure a sustainable and amiable partnership by committing only to that which can be delivered with quality and in a timely manner without compromising the needs of students.

Community colleges and higher education in general face a tremendous demand for responsive educational programs. But this pressure also provides the greatest opportunity for change and innovation in education since World War II. Community colleges are better positioned than any other sector of education to respond to these challenges because they are already closely tied to so many segments of their communities. These ties can be strengthened and mobilized to help colleges do the jobs for which they were created.

The successful experiences of Kirkwood and other community colleges demonstrate the power and value of partnerships. Aligning the activities of the college with the needs and goals of the community enhances the impact of the college's services. Partnerships are simply good business–and they work.

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Collaborative Initiatives: Is There a Role for Accreditation?

Burton O. Witthuhn

Quality assurance and institutional and program improvement are central to the purposes of accreditation (NCA *Handbook* 1997). Demonstration of these purposes is achieved by institutional presentation of "Patterns of Evidence" to substantiate fulfillment of the Criteria and General Institutional Requirements. But, as Steven Crow cautioned in his article in the Spring, 1997, *NCA Quarterly* entitled, "Measuring Moving Targets: An Unfinished Theme," unless institutions are enabled to revise what they are about, they will simply measure what is, rather than measure themselves against where they must move (Crow 1997).

Collaboration is a reality needing to be addressed in the accreditation process. Increasingly, students do not earn a degree by completion of requirements at a single institution. Inter-institutional articulation, virtual access, consortial programs, and transfer make most transcripts a composite reality. Thus, how should accreditation deal with the quality assurance of credentialed students? Since the component parts making up a program of studies may come from different sources, what "Patterns of Evidence" should be used to measure multi-institutional contributions to a degree completion?

Part of the answer to these questions is to be found by stepping outside of the higher education arena. Today very few products of any complexity are manufactured in totality by a single producer. Nevertheless, when the assembled product is put on the market, the complete assurance of quality remains solely the responsibility of the manufacturer who places the nameplate on the product. It is the manufacturer of record's responsibility to ensure the quality of the product. Similarly, it is not the course provider's responsibility to ensure degree quality; it is the institution of record that must ensure the quality of the degrees it credentials.

Since inter-institutional collaborations provide the possibility of increasing disconnection from accreditation oversight, it is important to address this moving target and to make sure that an institution's "General Institutional Requirements" and patterns of evidence support consumer confidence in the assurance of degree quality.

Fortunately, the design of the NCA accreditation process provides the opportunity to create a model structure for institutions and evaluators to use to ensure that quality is not sacrificed when institutions collaborate to provide students easier access to degree completion.

What follows are questions that might be posed when answering concerns of collaborative programming.

- **Mission:** Does the mission reflect the collaborative practices? If more than 50% of the credits transcripted for graduation are not earned at an institution, how should the mission reflect this fact?

  Does the University credential degrees or provide instruction so that one might earn a degree?

- **Governance:** Does the governing board encourage policies supportive of collaborative initiatives? If so, how and why?

- **Faculty:** Do faculty teach a sufficient proportion of an institution's transcripted curriculum to ensure judgments of quality?

Do faculty evaluate transfer students for performance and content proficiencies, or is transfer simply a bureaucratic function?

- **Degrees:** Are the announced degree outcomes compatible with an institution's mission?
- **General Education:** How does the institution acknowledge the centrality of the general education component, particularly for course content met through transfer?
- **Public Information:** How are program quality assurances communicated to potential consumers?
- **Criterion One:** Has the institution demonstrated that all collaborative programming is with regionally accredited institutions supportive of the institution's mission?
- **Criterion Two:** What resources have been devoted to collaborative program achievement?

  What support services are provided to students at partner institutions or in approved - collaborative arrangements?
- **Criterion Three:** What assessment occurs of external course delivery, transfer credits, or end of degree competencies to ensure quality outcomes?
- **Criterion Four:** How does the institution demonstrate the educational effectiveness of its declared collaborative efforts?
- **Criterion Five:** How ethical are the practices employed for determination of degree completion?

Still other issues of importance are captured in the five Criteria and 24 General Institutional Requirements. By using the NCA Criteria as a basis for measuring collaboratively produced educational programming, institutions can assure their publics of continuing program quality.

This session will further explore how the accreditation template can be used to better promulgate effective collaborations.

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Chapter 2

Case Studies in Collaboration: Learning Resources

THE Collaborative Imperative

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Information Literacy:
The Collaborative Imperative

Dane Ward
Richard Raspa

Introduction: Information and Collaboration

The demand for information literacy has become the collaborative imperative in higher education today. Information literacy—the power to access, use, and communicate information—has emerged as the premier competency of the late twentieth century. The explosion of information and its tremendous availability through technology has created a global environment where those with rapid access to information and the knowledge to use it have the advantage over those without. On the edge of the twenty-first century, information has become the metaphor for power. Institutions that integrate information literacy into their curricula will empower their students with new ways of learning, working, and, ultimately, being.

This paper will address the ways Wayne State University's new undergraduate library and its redesigned freshman orientation course UGE 100 provide opportunities to develop information literacy, and to establish a collaborative learning environment among faculty, librarians, administrators, academic staff, counselors, and students.

The Collaborative Imperative and the Dialogue of Wonder

In the context of this paper, collaboration suggests meaningful sharing among participants in the academic community to create a powerful learning experience not otherwise achievable through individual efforts. Collaboration suggests a giving of oneself, engaging mind, feeling, and personal identity, a disclosing of vulnerability to the other within a process not always comfortable. It is a process through which the participating community receives a sum greater than its parts. Collaboration inspires synergism.

The root meaning of collaboration is from the Latin—col-laborare, meaning to work together. How do we work together in an academic environment? Typically, we do not. We esteem independent research and achievement over collaborative enterprise. And we reward people on the measure of how well they distinguish their scholarship, or teaching, or their administration. While individual research is a valuable practice in the production and transmission of knowledge, it is not the only mode of educating, learning, or, even, of professional expression. Collaboration is an alternative. However, whereas solitary scholarship is prized, collaborative projects, unfortunately, are often regarded as second best, a sort of refined failure of the intellect, or perhaps, even, a defect of character. To speak about the collaborative imperative, then, first requires a shift in thinking and a reappraisal of the power of collaboration. We need to distinguish the contribution collaboration makes to educating human beings.

To begin with, collaborating is a way of being in the world. When we collaborate, we engage the fellow collaborator as a person rather than as a function, instrument, or problem. Such engagement acknowledges the potential for creative action within the self and in the interplay between the self and other. When we collaborate we recognize that creativity must be summoned in each other and focused in the world to be real. We work together to bring into being our dreams, dreams that would otherwise lie dormant in the imaginations of separate people. Collaboration calls into being the energy and commitment to make something real.

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Collaboration occurs in every domain of life. In marriage, it is the ability to stand together and face the world, or to stand apart and face each other. Collaboration in marriage allows us to tell the truth, especially in moments of crisis, and at the same time, honor the other. In work life, it is the ability to deal respectfully with conflict and yet align behind common goals. In education, collaboration is the ability to wonder together–to ponder the elegance of a quadratic equation, the intricacies of DNA, the blinding illuminations of Goya's paintings. We marvel at the ways of figuring and configuring the world and its problems. To wonder this way is to draw out the other–our collaborator–and together ponder the mystery of things, provoking questions and more questions, and still more questions, and sometimes, even, an answer or two that satisfies the soul's yearning for meaning. Sometimes collaboration inspires the rapture of insight. To collaborate with another is to venture behind the polite fences that categorize the world and keep us, for the time being, safe. To collaborate is to enter that liminal space where we do not know beforehand the answer, but we see, feel, sense the traces of some phenomenon, and, most important, are willing to have our safe formulations, our fictions of order, and our fences protecting us from chaos, disrupted and even torn apart.

Collaboration is the passionate pursuit of knowledge in dialogue, in the open spaces of the give-and-take of intelligent conversation where we hear the other and are heard by him or her, where we question, prod, pull, dig. On this journey into knowing, sometimes we may feel as though we are being pushed and shoved, and in those moments we need to remind ourselves to remain open to the other as partner and fellow traveller. In this dialogic process, we risk the past, the old questions, the antiquated solutions, even who we are and what we believe is real, true, and good. Collaboration poises us to encounter the other in the dialogue of wonder and together enter the search for meaning and for truth. Collaboration is not just a way of thinking or acting. It is a mode of being, a way of being with the other. To work with–to collaborate–is to be with each other in states of wonder.

From Location to Collaboration

The development of information literacy results from just such a collaborative adventure, a dialogue of wonder in which boundaries blur between instructors and students, between teaching and learning, and between information providers and information receivers. Information literacy is dependent upon the medium of the computer that has transformed information from the status of hard, intractable facts to provisional framing of the flux of things. In this Information Age, the researcher is not merely reporting hard data but is a collaborator, a participant in the construction of information. The pursuit of information literacy involves the acceptance of the blending of the worlds of knowledge: its interdisciplinary nature and its real or virtual location. Information literacy is not merely learning how to locate information at a given storage place in the library. Nor is it a new form of bibliographic instruction. It is a collaborative process whereby one learns to manage and use information through dialogue and to determine what information is needed, and how to obtain, evaluate, and use it. Information literacy is a dialogue with other people, with constantly changing, unbounded resources, and with the self. The collaborative aspect of information literacy becomes obvious when one considers the preferred way of learning to use new computer technology is not through reading print but through oral, face-to-face communication.

As a contrast, compare traditional library-based instruction with information literacy-related activities. In the recent past, it was common practice for an instructor to arrange for his or her class a tour and lecture on the institution's library and its resources. It was not necessarily linked to an assignment. It was not interactive. In many ways, it was a visit to a vast museum. Corridors of books were shelved in one location, serials in another, Reference in another. Mastering the library was a spatial achievement and involved moving the body through stacks and stacks of bound printed matter. Today, the space has shifted. The researcher sits in one location and surfs the Web or any number of other data bases. The instructional shift transports us into considerations of process rather than product, the flow of information rather than its specific location, interactive learning rather than passive listening, and collaborative endeavors rather than the solitary searches.

Passive learning is past and libraries are not so much repositories of books as information centers with immediate access to the world. The necessity of learning how to manage information has become obvious as the quantity of information and the accompanying technologies have exploded. This means that it is less important now to show students where materials are located in the library and what reference materials are important than it is to help them learn how to find needed information, how to think about it, and how to talk about it. In the past, we focused on static models of library instruction that included such ideas as helping students locate books and journal articles in the library. Now, we strive towards dynamic models that recognize the constant flux of the information environment. As such, we provide students with broader concepts and principles that empower them, and focus on collaboration among those who are forging continually new information pathways. Developing information literacy requires the sense of wonder and collaboration.

At Wayne State University, some of us have aspired to be collaborators in this sense, which has resulted in a course focused on the information literacy dialogue, and an undergraduate library that, through design and happenstance, has become the locus for the exploration of collaborative instruction on information management.

The First Twist: Collaboration among Students and Teachers

Today, twenty-seven percent of college freshmen nation-wide do not return for the sophomore year. College graduation is the lowest in more than a decade. Wayne State developed UGE 100, a one-credit, seven-week course required of every incoming freshman, to stem the tide of dropouts.

What is required for success in the information age, we assert to our students, is what we are calling information literacy. Information is the root metaphor for the course and we think it is particularly relevant as we approach the millennium when power will be in the hands of those who can use and communicate information rather than those who own or manipulate things.

UGE 100 requires collaboration inside and outside the classroom. From the first day of class, students become part of a team to develop a panel debate. Each member of the team is required to take a piece of the debate topic and part of the argument. The debate topic is framed as a resolution, such as: That the US Supreme Court should prohibit the use of capital punishment. Resolved: that abortion should be declared illegal. Resolved: that race should not be considered a factor in gaining admission to universities. To support or challenge these contentions, students are coached in how to access information electronically from the many data bases that are available on the computer, and how to read that information and represent it in a structured argument. During class, students get into groups with other team members and become collaborators–asking questions, organizing information into categories of evidence to support their assertions, and evaluating the effectiveness of propositions. In the course, the teacher is transformed from a repository of knowledge to a kind of coach, who, with the students, engages the questions. The course meets five times in a classroom and twice in the new undergraduate library.

The Expanding Spiral: Collaboration among Students, Faculty, and Librarians

During the two sessions in the library, students sit at a computer and are coached through the process of accessing data bases. The Adamany Undergraduate Library opened in September 1997 with 700 computers, connected to a vast array of electronic resources; 30 collaborative study rooms. With three instructional labs, each with 30-40 computers and networked laser printers, we have the capability of conducting information management workshops. A typical UGE session in the library involves (1) clarifying the debate topic and helping students to define their information need, (2) identifying the appropriate terms to use in searching, (3) searching the data bases for relevant citations and full-text articles, and printing them. In this last step, the librarian briefly introduces a data base and then lets students work with it. Like the teacher and the library building itself, the librarian is a "guide on the side rather than a sage on the stage."

Spending time in the library reduces freshman anxiety associated with research. It also has the immediate advantage of pushing students right into the research process as they develop the ability to access on-line information. This collaborative interplay gives emotional support to students and leads them to the prime challenge of intellectual life–the testing of ideas in the fire of debate. The library is no longer a museum of antiquaries, but the space of collaboration, a place to wonder in and with others wonder about the beauties and the dilemmas of the world.

A New Universe: Libraries, Information Literacy, and the Future of Collaboration

In a very real sense, UGE 100 and the Adamany Undergraduate Library provide the university with tremendous opportunities for collaborative teaching initiatives and the development of information literacy. Within the first three months, five librarians delivered 276 sessions, 100 of these in collaboration with the UGE instructors. In addition, the campus community actively explored collaboration at the Library by providing e-mail sessions for students, training opportunities for administrative departments, demonstrations for various organizations affiliated with members of the university, and as the site of an Undergraduate Research Conference in which students and their faculty mentors present results of collaborative research. Our goal is to eventually integrate the library and information skills instruction into the formal structure of the university curriculum. UGE is a collaborative first step. Our next step will probably involve identifying a second tier of courses in which information literacy may be included.

Information Literacy is becoming an important part of collaborative efforts on campus. No one–neither teaching faculty, nor librarians, nor student services staff–can adequately address the development of information skills in isolation. We can, however, collaborate to empower our students to succeed in school, in their careers, and in their lives. Collaboration is a human undertaking and an experimental art form. There is science here, but also art. It was as if someone said: if you build the library, they will come...and collaborate!

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Multi-Institutional Collaboration to Strengthen Campus Information Technologies

Edward D. Garten

It is an all too well known reality that academic libraries have for several generations faced rising costs and diminishing buying power as they have attempted to meet the rising information needs of scholars. Numerous successful library consortia exist around the nation, and they have squarely faced a range of technology, cost-containment, and inter-institutional cooperation issues. None, however, have achieved the extensive and broad-based level of collaboration represented in the Ohio Library and Information Network (OhioLINK).

OhioLINK, arguably the most significant library information technology venture in the nation, arose as a visionary collaboration between Ohio's college and university libraries and the Ohio Board of Regents. The initiative had its roots in a 1987 recommendation from the Board of Regents that "the state of Ohio implement as expeditiously as possible a statewide electronic catalog system." Today, OhioLINK's vision has moved well beyond its initial set of objectives. Indeed, OhioLINK has become the world's leading library information technology consortium, breaking new ground relative to how both academics and the general public view the role of academic libraries and information technologies. This presentation will discuss the current status of OhioLINK, suggest reasons why it has proven so successful as a model of complex multi-institutional collaboration, and offer insight into some of the new issues and questions such consortia pose for accreditation and the evaluation of campus information technologies.

Development of OhioLINK

In response to the initial recommendation in 1987, the Ohio Board of Regents established a steering committee representing librarians, faculty, administrators, and computer systems managers from state university campuses throughout Ohio. Two private universities—Case-Western Reserve University and The University of Dayton—joined the early discussions as well. After extensive meetings and open hearings, a planning paper was prepared and distributed (November 1988); a Request for Information was prepared (February 1989); and a Request for Proposal (August 1989) was initiated. This resulted in the selection of Innovative Interfaces, Inc., as the vendor asked to develop the unique software system to create the OhioLINK central catalog. Early on, OhioLINK licensed four data bases from University Microfilms International, giving students and faculty access to millions of business, periodical, and newspaper articles and to academic dissertations. These elements formed the foundation of the system.

In 1992 six universities installed OhioLINK systems and began the ongoing process of building the central catalog. Now 56 institutions are served by OhioLINK's integrated local and central catalogs, an on-line patron-initiated borrowing system, 66 research data bases, and document delivery services. OhioLINK now includes 15 public universities, 23 community and technical colleges, 15 private universities and colleges, and the State Library of Ohio. The system provides access to more than 4,500 simultaneous users at 104 locations serving more than 500,000 students, faculty, and staff.

In February 1996 OhioLINK began offering services through the World Wide Web. To date the OhioLINK central catalog contains more than 6.4 million master records from 56 libraries, encompassing all law and medical collections and most special collections. The OhioLINK central catalog also is available to users from outside the OhioLINK network through the Internet. However, access to the research data bases is restricted to OhioLINK member users.

The Uniqueness of OhioLINK's Collaborative Success

Perhaps one of the major reasons "why" OhioLINK has worked so effectively to create a dramatically new model of library and information technology collaboration is that, from the beginning, library deans and directors avoided several postures all too common in academic libraries and state university systems. First, while differences in size and perceived status of OhioLINK colleges and universities and, subsequently, their associated libraries, is great and cannot be dismissed, it has been remarkable that few "superior/inferior" postures have emerged that might have impeded progress. Second, there has been strong evidence of a reasonable and necessary balance between organizational "movers" and "bridge-builders" with the scale tipping toward the former. Volunteer leadership from every OhioLINK charter member emerged to contribute to early and substantial success. These leaders–library systems administrators, deans/directors, computer center professionals, informed faculty members, and senior university administrators–displayed positive, forward-thinking attitudes and actively sought to build consensus at every turn. Accordingly, a portion of this leadership contributed necessary hand holding and bridge-building skills, which enabled skeptics to be brought into the evolving organization, thus enriching the whole through differing but often compatible approaches.

Those individuals who constituted OhioLINK could easily have created just another bureaucracy; rather, they insisted upon the development of a central staff team that modeled the best characteristics of progressive and responsive organizations. Staff was hired with an equal emphasis on technical and interpersonal skills. The first executive director was a visionary with savvy political skills; the second executive director has brought to the environment a remarkable ability to be collaborative yet firm, visionary yet not controlling. Most critical has been the executive director's negotiating skills that avoided the early closing of alternatives and options.

Finally, the notion of shared resources on a massive scale was something that captured the interest and imagination of everyone from the politician in the legislature to the end-user student and faculty member. All of these things have allowed the consortium to leverage new opportunities, many for the first time or at such a large scale. In only a few years, OhioLINK achieved several major "wins," among them the following:

- It established patron on-line borrowing as the hallmark of the system. Before, patron-initiated on-line borrowing among participant universities averaged just 25,000 interlibrary loan requests a year. After this first-among-consortia innovation, patron requests totaled 505,000 in 1996-97; volume has continued to grow by 26% a year.
- It established itself as the first library technology consortium to state early its intent and support for private liberal arts college participation in what originally began as predominately state-university based initiative.
- It became the first library information technology consortium to contract with the world's largest scientific publisher (Elsevier) for statewide, on-line, full-text access to more than 1,100 of the most-used research journals.
- It quickly positioned itself as a partner in the instructional design process through grants to create instructional web sites that stimulate innovative ways for faculty to improve classroom instruction through the use of the Internet, the World Wide Web, OhioLINK, and local library resources. OhioLINK is now viewed as a partner in the instructional design process on many of its partner campuses.
- It rapidly moved into an increasingly media-rich working environment with access to more forms of media and greater use of new graphical technologies. Early on, OhioLINK established content standards, an integrating framework, and user interfaces, all premised on a long-term strategic plan, rather than on individual content management systems that may change over time.

OhioLINK's Success: Marriage of Necessary Factors

Given the complexity of Ohio's political and academic environment, OhioLINK's creators foresaw a world in which scholars could pursue their information-seeking needs from their desktops. Ohio has rightly put into motion a revolution in the way library services are delivered to universities and colleges. To date, this degree and level of innovation has not occurred in any other state or region of the county. What factors joined to create this unprecedented model of collaboration?

- A central administrative authority (Board of Regents) with the vision and the political and financial will to put together a coalition that worked.

- A substantial and generous budget from the start, along with the willingness to include, at the outset, two private research-oriented universities and the State Library of Ohio as the means of broadening appeal to politicians.
- The "right leaders at the right time." From the visionary leadership at the Chancellor's level, to the selection of the initial and subsequent executive directors, and to the day-to-day leadership of local library leadership, individuals from the start wanted things to work and work well. Additionally, many local campus leaders made conscious choices to devote significant energies to OhioLINK's success, even if that meant giving less time to other worthy local campus initiatives.
- An exceptional approach to consensus building, from the central OhioLINK staff to the committee structure, to the local campuses. Ownership, at all levels, of OhioLINK's direction; the ability, along the entire continuum of participants, to make wise, judicious, and conclusive decisions; and the willingness not to create bureaucracy.
- A cultural legacy of collaboration in Ohio libraries extending to the creation of OCLC—a tradition of individuals cooperating, seeing the benefits of cooperation, and desiring even higher levels of cooperation.
- Selection of a primary technology vendor who could develop unique, sophisticated software that worked, as well as a willingness to hold the vendor accountable. Consequently, Innovative Interfaces has viewed OhioLINK not as "another customer" but rather as a true partner.

New Challenges and Opportunities

The several hundred academics and information professionals who have helped create OhioLINK have afforded all those associated with Ohio's academic libraries a unique fellowship that has strengthened the free flow of information and technology.

More critical perhaps, members of the consortium have discovered new ways of working together and formed new perspectives as they have pursued one goal: Seeking and finding information access solutions that create the greatest good for the greatest number. Less than a decade ago, individuals associated with one of Ohio's smaller academic libraries might have hesitated to solicit or share information with the larger university down the road. Conversely, principals associated with many of the larger university libraries might have been reluctant to share resources and talent with the "small fry" just across town.

As the nation's most progressive statewide library consortium, OhioLINK has used collaboration to parlay quality and access in cost-effective fashion. Its principals have considered the full context—local, regional, state, and national—when making decisions. The consortium has delivered the greatest benefit from resources by improving productivity, by establishing collaborative partnerships, and by developing and meeting standards of quality. Perhaps most significantly, OhioLINK has created a culture of learning within its 56 participant libraries, which is characterized by high levels of action-reflection, sharing of information, and active collaboration. There is the strong anticipation that OhioLINK will continue its cross-consortia and cross-library type relationships, working to develop mutually beneficial collaborations with the Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN) and SchoolNet, Ohio's elementary and secondary library system.

The future of OhioLINK will be characterized by continued focus on increasing the utility of library collections across the state, enhancement of and selective expansion of journal citation data bases, and an accelerated effort to build a critical mass of electronically retrievable texts. Moreover, OhioLINK will continue to leverage advantage of rapidly advancing technologies to expand into image, map, numeric, and other non-text based data sources.

Ohio has created the world-class standard for an Internet-based electronic library information system to support its system of higher education. The imperative to collaborate on a large scale serves as an example of how one state can take a massive step forward—if essential elements are in place and nurtured—to gain a quantum leap in the productivity and utility of its library and information resources.

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The South Dakota Library Network: Lessons in Academic Collaboration, Leadership, and Cost-Effectiveness

Ethelle S. Bean
Ronelle K. H. Thompson

Overview

Begun in 1986, the South Dakota Library Network (SDLN) provides the foundation for an information infrastructure available to all South Dakotans. Using emerging technological standards and methods SDLN leverages the State's existing library resources of over 4 million titles and provides access to significant electronic data banks. SDLN is funded primarily by 47 full member libraries cooperating to share traditional and electronic resources among more than 200 school, public, private, academic, tribal, medical, government, and corporate libraries. SDLN's group purchasing power makes links to electronic data bases available at significant savings for individual member libraries. By working collaboratively, SDLN and its member librarians align technology to overcome the limitations of space and two time zones, to offer every South Dakota resident access to resources regardless of the location of the information or the resident.

Background

SDLN is a comprehensive automated library system using the PALS software developed by Mankato State University in Minnesota. In 1994 the SDLN mainframe was connected to the state's backbone telecommunications network and Internet, providing access to SDLN from anywhere in the world. SDLN has also made it possible for a citizen anywhere in the state to gain access using a modem. SDLN has more than 160 libraries that are dial access members. In 1997, total average usage exceeded 3,500,000 transactions/month.

The PALS software allows South Dakota libraries to search the holdings of all the member institutions simultaneously, individually, or by regional groups. In addition, the software supports a full range of library functions–circulation, cataloging, acquisitions, serials, inventory, and interlibrary loan. SDLN provides linkages with the multi-library PALS-based systems in both Minnesota and North Dakota.

In 1994 SDLN was expanded to include Information Access Company's on-line data bases. They are *Magazine Index, Expanded Academic Index, Business Index, Corporate Profiles, Health Index, Journals in Education, Resources in Education,* and the *Sioux Falls Argus Leader Index.* As the result of a recent federal grant to one of SDLN's member libraries, periodical access has been expanded to include full-text for the IAC indexes on SDLN. To maximize its computer efficiencies, SDLN supports a gateway via the Internet to IAC for the full-text files.

Governance

The governance structure of SDLN evolved over time. Original meetings were called under the auspices of the South Dakota Library Association, allowing broad participation. Prospective member libraries sent at least one contact person and groups of libraries (schools, small public) had at least one designated representative present at discussions. After an integrated library software system was chosen an Advisory Council was established that became known for its lengthy, heavily-attended meetings. A deliberate decision was made to govern the network by allowing each member library a vote, regardless of institutional size or amount of annual SDLN fee. As SDLN matured, trust in leadership and security with network processes developed, resulting in the creation of an elected Executive Board. The Advisory Council maintains final authority on policies and fees.

SDLN emerged from a joint powers act between the South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs and the South Dakota Board of Regents. SDLN ensures that all its networking meets or exceeds the standards established by the South Dakota Bureau of Information and Telecommunications. Currently SDLN's Advisory Council meets biannually, functioning with an elected chair and a seven-member Executive Committee that works with the SDLN staff to plan and manage daily activities of the system. The Advisory Council chair and Executive Committee members are elected for staggered two-year terms. The Executive Committee includes an appointee of the Executive Director of the Board of Regents, responsible for supervising the Network Operations Director. The State Librarian, representing the South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, serves as chair of SDLN's Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee provides leadership for strategic planning, an activity that often becomes a group writing process including Advisory Council and User Group members. Although time consuming, strategic planning is a process that enables a consortium to communicate with its members and is a means for members to communicate with the elected leaders. While the final document is important, the discussions of drafts and editing that lead to member buy-in are equally essential. Leaders can rely on individual librarians and library supporters to communicate with politicians when special funding is needed.

SDLN continues its close ties to the South Dakota Library Association, having Advisory Council and User Group meetings as part of the Association's annual meeting. In addition, the SDLA newsletter, *Bookmarks*, features a regular SDLN column. SDLN compiles a *Factbook* annually for the benefit of member libraries, academic leaders, board members, legislators, and other state leaders.

User groups in specialized areas of functionality (Cataloging, ILL, Serials/Acquisitions, Reference, Government Documents, Public Library, Dial Access) provide a forum for sharing ideas, strategies, problem solving, etc., for users of SDLN. Each member library has a staff person who serves as technical contact for SDLN operations in its library. Technical contacts meet and communicate regularly.

Finances

U.S. Department of Education Title III grant funding provided a portion of the seed money for the creation of the South Dakota Library Network. Title III money was leveraged to obtain additional state funding for the ten initial members—eight state regental institutions, the State Library, and the state historical society library. SDLN quickly expanded from the original base of ten libraries to nearly thirty member libraries.

SDLN's member libraries provide the system's primary financial support ($669,134 for FY97). The budget is developed annually and results in a per institution fee. The billing formula was designed to divide costs among the member libraries as fairly as possible. The fee includes a base fee of $5,000 per institution and takes into account the number of records and transactions attributed to each library. Shared costs make it possible for each library to provide a level of access beyond its individual means.

SDLN has successfully sought support for major software and equipment upgrades from state and federal government agencies, as well as private foundations. The network also provides a vehicle for negotiating agreements with other agencies both in and out of the state for cost savings. SDLN is currently working to identify funding for a $1.8 million software/hardware migration.

Academic Leadership

The success of the South Dakota Library Network has been directly related to the emergence of leaders and champions both in and out of the library community. Most of these leaders came from the state's academic community, both private and public. There was early recognition that a statewide system would be stronger than any individual or smaller group system. Leaders were willing to take risks, to dream of possibilities, and to move forward before all the details could be identified. Academic librarians, representing the largest libraries in the state, were willing to set aside turf issues and egos to embrace a vision of a statewide system that encompassed libraries of all types and sizes.

Open meetings played an important role in permitting everyone's point of view to be aired and discussed until consensus was built. Statewide demonstrations were used to educate librarians, decision makers, and the public about the benefits of a statewide automated library system. Academic librarians used their bibliographic instruction skills and access to technology to create and present these public demonstrations.

The services provided by SDLN to its member libraries continue to receive enthusiastic reviews when our academic libraries are visited, whether by accreditation teams, prospective students and parents, faculty recruits, potential donors, or grant officers. It has become apparent that we represent an early and successful model of library cooperation and collaboration.

Advantages

The SDLN offers enormous and tangible benefits for library patrons throughout South Dakota in increased access to local collections, increased access to state resources, electronic access to periodical indexes and full-text. Patrons also benefit from an infrastructure that supports electronic communication and overnight delivery of materials through a statewide courier. From its beginning SDLN has provided a means for the smallest libraries to access the data base remotely. This same philosophy allowed individual patrons the ability to dial into SDLN from a dorm room, home, or office.

The SDLN offers significant and cost-effective benefits to each member library regardless of size. The single union catalog data base provides a means for deliberate collection development and a foundation for many library functions to be automated and performed without needless repetition. Patron initiated requests for interlibrary loans reduce processing time. Group purchasing power allows tight library budgets to stretch further while providing better access.

Challenges

The challenges of maintaining a system such as the South Dakota Library Network are many. There are challenges on the performance side—recruiting and retaining staff to manage the daily operations of the network, choosing and maintaining the appropriate hardware and software, ensuring adequate training opportunities across the state. There are challenges within the political arena when special funding is needed, as it is currently, for a major software/ hardware upgrade.

Because SDLN is self-funded, it is essential that each member library contribute more than just fees. All of the committee and user group chairs and members are volunteers who contribute their ideas, work, and leadership without compensation. SDLN staffing is lean, making the willingness of member libraries to train and share among each other vital to the health of the network.

However, the most significant challenge for SDLN lies in avoiding complacency. The challenge for librarians engaged in a cooperative system such as SDLN is to maintain ongoing and appropriate levels of communication and strategic planning to ensure the future viability of the system. The role that academic librarians play in South Dakota is enormous. Encouragement by and recognition of this role by our academic administrators is essential for our long-term success.

Vision

The Executive Committee of SDLN recently articulated a revised vision statement to use in conjunction with its search for a replacement automation system. The statement follows.

> The vision of the South Dakota Library Network is to expand and improve its existing electronic information system allowing all residents immediate and seamless access to the following types of information:
>
> - global information resources: international, federal;
> - state and regional information resources: information from state governments, regional or statewide agencies and associations;

  - local information resources: from library collections, newspapers, historical societies, municipalities, archives, and other unique collections.

Librarians, as information professionals, will be empowered by SDLN to assist residents in navigating their way among information resources. The new SDLN system will be intuitive, so that people, young and old, operating with a variety of computer skills, will be able to find what they need–whether a book, a journal article, an on-line text, an image, a song, or a video clip. The network will facilitate the delivery of those resources, on-line if appropriate and possible, or physically if not available electronically.

SDLN will strengthen rural and school libraries by providing both networked information resources and a vehicle to access research librarians to supplement a local library's ability to meet specialized information needs. Furthermore, SDLN will foster a sense of statewide community, reducing geographic and economic barriers by dramatically improving the information available to present and future generations of South Dakotans.

Summary

South Dakota is a state rich in geographic expanse, but limited in population density. South Dakota librarians have been diligent in working together to maximize the information resources available to all the residents of the state. Our automation evolution is one of continued negotiating and compromising to maintain a statewide perspective. It is not always easy to work together, but we have proved repeatedly that when we do, all library patrons in South Dakota benefit.

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Educational Technology Center: A Unique Collaboration Between Education and Business

Donald Crist
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Leaders from Carl Sandburg College, Knox College, and the Galesburg Community Unit School District #205 came together to forge a unique partnership to develop a state-of-the-art technology center in downtown Galesburg, Illinois. This facility, the *Educational Technology Center (ETC)*, was designed to meet not only the needs of the three educational institutions, but also to serve as a technology training facility for area businesses. Realizing the value of establishing one site for a majority of the community's technology needs, local businesses funded almost the entire project. This unusual consortium of a community college, a private liberal arts college, and a public school district, supported by private sector contributions, was an innovative approach within Illinois and may even be the first of its kind nationwide. In less than a year after the initial idea was conceived, the facility held its "electronic on-line" ribbon cutting ceremony. The Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the United States Department of Education have all recognized this project as being innovative and responsive.

Galesburg, Illinois, is a rural community located in west central Illinois, with a population of approximately 33,000. The Carl Sandburg College district covers a 3,000 square mile area including all or parts of ten counties. Sandburg serves about 3,000 students at its main campus on the northern edge of Galesburg. Knox College serves nearly 1,200 baccalaureate students from all over the United States and numerous foreign countries. The Knox campus is located in a compact area in downtown Galesburg. The public school district serves about 5,000 students within the city limits and surrounding rural areas. All three of these educational institutions were in need of many current technologies to serve their populations better. However, each institution faced similar financial constraints that minimized their ability to accomplish the desired goals individually. Upgraded technology was needed to sustain the students and faculty of the Galesburg community at a level consistent with the rest of the country. In addition, local businesses found the increasing cost of providing training in technology arenas was rising faster than they could maintain. They collectively realized it would be more cost-efficient for one facility to address the needs, rather than for each business to struggle to stay current.

The ETC provides three open computer labs, three computer classrooms, one satellite teleconference room, a business meeting room, and fully interactive video conferencing equipment for distance learning. Of the $550,000 total project cost, almost $400,000 was pledged by local businesses. Additional funds were provided by several grants acquired by the consortium partners. Two grants covered some equipment purchases and a third grant subsidized wages for the student computer lab assistants.

The ETC provides area businesses with the opportunity to conduct training on most popular commercial software packages. Customized classes are also developed for company-specific software when requested. Teleconferences can be downlinked for individual companies, the three educational institutions, and/or the general public. Graduate level and special professional courses are also available through use of the codec distance learning equipment. As knowledge of the versatility of the ETC expands, many more businesses are utilizing the center for increasingly different types of training needs.

Since the opening of the ETC, all three educational partners have provided varying amounts of personnel support to the project, with on-site direct and indirect labor. Carl Sandburg College's business and industry training branch moved into the facility in February 1996, providing a director, an office manager, and a secretary. Knox College provides most of the student computer lab assistants, back-up clerical staff, and weekly custodial services and maintenance support. The public school system supplies a part-time clerical person for evenings and weekends, in addition to assigning the system's new district technology coordinator to be housed within the facility. Operating expenses are shared by all three institutions. Initially the costs were split, with 40 percent assumed by both Carl Sandburg College and Knox College and 20 percent assumed by the public school system. However, at the end of the first year, each institution's total usage was determined, and new cost apportionments were calculated for the coming year based upon the prior year's usage. This year Carl Sandburg College is contributing 50 percent; Knox College, 10 percent; and the public school system, 40 percent. All three institutions continue to react to special needs as they occur and coordinate resources to accomplish goals.

The ETC provides the educational institutions a central downtown location for all technology needs. All students and staff of the three institutions are provided with free memberships to the ETC. The general public pays a monthly membership and businesses pay a rental fee for the various classrooms. Faculty workshops are conducted at the ETC, as well as specific projects for a wide cross-section of courses. Many computer classes are offered for the general public covering everything from Windows 95 to PowerPoint and Internet. This facility is used by all ages, from grade school to senior citizens, on a daily basis.

In summary, this type of endeavor could not have happened without the extensive partnerships and alliances between the educational institutions and the business community. What makes this particular model appealing is the ability to replicate this idea in other areas across the county. In fact, several community colleges have already called and expressed interest in learning the details for their regions. The ETC provides benefits to all of the academic institutions, the business community, and the general public that could not have been achieved without the collaborative efforts of all the participants.

Several other consortium projects have evolved since the phenomenal success of the Educational Technology Center. The Washington Gale Scholars Program identifies economically- and socially-disadvantaged, but academically proficient, students who may apply for this special scholarship program during their eighth grade year. Twelve students were chosen in May 1997 for the initial class. These students will be closely counseled throughout their high school years and will receive tuition-free education for their associate's degree at Carl Sandburg College. They will also be able to complete their baccalaureate degree at Knox College, tuition-free. All of these individuals will be first generation college students within their respective families. Each year a new group of 12 students will be awarded the Washington Gale Scholarship.

Another consortium effort among Carl Sandburg College, the industrial community, the business incubator, and the area vocational center has progressed to nearly half of its two million dollar goal. This capital fund drive will result in a new Center for Manufacturing Excellence (CME) to be built on the Carl Sandburg College campus during the summer of 1998. The CME will provide a dramatically expanded opportunity for industrial training to meet the needs of area manufacturers. The facility will be built with business pledges and grant dollars. It will be operated by a board of industry leaders and college administrators as a self-sufficient enterprise.

The strong alliance begun by Galesburg's educators and extended to the business community continues to seek new and exciting projects to benefit students, faculty, businesses, the general public of all ages, and the overall economic prosperity of the Galesburg area.

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Developing a Multi-Institutional Collaboration: A Model for Success

Meredith Gillette
Marna E. Boyle

Introduction

As we move toward the close of the 20th Century, efforts in collaboration have developed more rapidly and become deeper and more sophisticated in many types of organizations. Both "collaboration" and "competition" among institutions of higher learning have long histories. Common areas of interest for disciplines or administrative concerns have always been discussed by academic institutions. Large university systems have regularly collaborated and developed common policies and shared purchases among their schools. These institutions, however, have a common mission. Collaboration among disparate institutions is not so common.

Because of limited resources and other pressures, more and more colleges and universities recognize that collaboration can provide better, faster, more effective delivery of services to meet common goals. Collaboration is not just a necessity, but a desirable and exciting new way to act in concert and align resources.

Feeling technology pressures and recognizing that there were new and extensive resources within reach, Cardinal Stritch University developed a consortium with three other academic institutions. Opportunities to begin discussion of a collaborative effort were enhanced by the proximity of some of the independent institutions and their membership in the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), a statewide organization of private institutions of higher learning. This consortium began in 1987 as a project to automate the libraries. In ten years it has moved beyond its original intent to include delivery of distance education materials and other wide ranging collaborative activities.

Development of the Southeastern Wisconsin Information Technology Exchange (SWITCH) Consortium

By 1987, most public academic institutions in Wisconsin had some type of automated library catalog. The University of Wisconsin System, including its two-year colleges, was completing a major project to automate its libraries. However, the private institutions had no projects of this type in place or projected. It was, therefore, a project waiting to happen—a project that could include examining the successes (and mistakes) made by institutions that had already automated. Thus, in early 1987, personnel of nine private institutions were invited to meet at Stritch to study how automation for each institution might be achieved by working together. The common location—the larger Milwaukee area—and the collaboration already in place led to a realization that sharing of information technology could be profitable. The first months resulted in the formation of a consortium and the development of a mission statement and objectives to achieve that mission.

Developmental Activities

The philosophy of librarians is based on sharing resources. The philosophy of grants officers is not necessarily the same since their efforts are directed toward their specific institutions and not "outside" groups. For this reason, it was necessary that the presidents of the specific institutions be the facilitators for achieving this type of cooperation.

By March 1987, Stritch received a library and information planning grant from the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation. This grant provided the support needed to form and advance the consortium. The goals of the grant included: examining technological advances available for library uses with an emphasis on areas appropriate to small liberal arts colleges; assessing the potential for cooperative strategies to pursue in concert with other independent colleges in the metropolitan Milwaukee area; analyzing costs associated with technological modifications to the Stritch library; gaining external support to expand resources and cooperative ventures among peer institutions; reporting to the Bradley Foundation upon conclusion of the project; and distributing the report to other independent institutions in the area.

The grant was prepared and developed by the Stritch grants officer for the benefit of the infant consortium. This model has continued to the present day. The consortium is working currently with a grant from The Foundation for Independent Higher Education to explore further technological activities. This grant was developed by the grants officer of another institutional member for the entire and fully developed consortium. A model for cooperative development activities has been established and continued.

Implementation

In 1991, after receiving several other supportive grants, the consortium needed the active and full financial support of its members. Four of the institutions made this commitment because of the full support of their presidents. The four ranged in size from Stritch's four thousand FTE students to institutions with fewer than 400 students. These institutions saw great advantages to the program as each brought a different focus and a different collection to share. The capability to do group purchasing and set cooperative procedures and policies emerged for the benefit of all. In August 1992, after many meetings and much hard work, the libraries all became totally automated. A single system was developed through active participation of four academic institutions, involving not only their library staffs but also their presidents, their financial officers, and their grants departments.

The second five years of SWITCH's existence moved from one success to another. Students quickly realized the advantages of a shared catalog, in which they could request materials—via the terminal—from another library and have those materials available in their own library within 24 hours. Colleges with distance education programs were able to connect students to the system and provide rapid service to them.

Speed of delivery is a key component of the system. The latest addition to SWITCH has been providing full text journal articles to e-mail addresses so that the user can locate an article and manipulate it into a word processing document. In a time when serial costs continue to skyrocket, this type of service, added at no extra cost to Stritch's data base, meant the availability of an additional 90 journals in full text through TOPCAT, the SWITCH consortium's on-line catalog service.

Unanticipated Outcomes

The success of SWITCH has led it to areas unanticipated or unthought of in 1987. Had the original library directors been told that they would develop a "web page" that would be accessible all over the world, they would not even have known what a "web page" was, let alone its universal accessibility. They all knew the "80-20" rule applications to library service—that is, 80% of the library circulation is based on 20% of its holdings. What they did not know was that on the day in August when SWITCH became fully operative, the walls of the libraries came down and the "80-20" rule reapplied to the "new" library. Each library found itself delivering to our colleagues material that had never been checked out in our own libraries! Shared collection development became a possibility; shared purchasing became a reality.

Summary

In summary, a role model based on true integration of services must include several elements, especially a clear understanding of purpose. This implies that the members are not competing with each other, but are cooperating for a common good. A successful inter-institutional collaborative model depends upon the full support of all the presidents. The presidents must ultimately require support from different areas of the institutions that normally are not accustomed to working collaboratively with other colleges/universities. There must be a recognition that collaboration may not always be an inexpensive way to do things, but inevitably it will be a better, faster, and more challenging way. It may include moving monies and responsibilities to the joint venture–in this case, the consortium. It may mean sharing employees as well as activities. SWITCH is innovative, interesting, and exciting. Cooperative ventures like SWITCH can provide new ways of delivering services for the common good.

For the Consortium, the Millennium started in 1987. It is a very exciting and interesting place to be!

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Chapter 3

Case Studies in Collaboration: Collaboration with Industry / Employers

THE Collaborative Imperative

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Integrating Graduate Study with Corporate Responsibilities

J. Bruce Francis
Suzanne G. James

Mid-career professionals form an increasing proportion of the enrollment of graduate institutions. It is true that entry into the professions, especially the academic and licensed professions, still requires an advanced graduate degree. Traditional graduate institutions, therefore, will continue to serve persons who pursue graduate study immediately after achieving their baccalaureate. Such a traditional, linear sequence is becoming more and more unusual, however. Graduate programs find that an increasing number of their students come from the ranks of young and mid-career professionals. Fueled by growing competition for advancement within corporate ranks and the need for advanced knowledge to deal well with society's growing complexity, these active and highly motivated students are changing the character of graduate education. In addition, the incredible pace of technical and cultural change is creating an enormous need for worker retraining. The average worker may soon need to be retrained more than a dozen times in his or her lifetime.

Current realities are causing a significant change in the way higher education institutions and corporations interact. Institutions such as The Graduate School of America (TGSA) have made it a part of their mission to seek out collaborative relationships with corporations, professional organizations, and other higher education institutions. The major motivation for such arrangements is the need among upper-level corporate managers, private consultants, and college faculty for high quality academic programs that contribute to their present and future professional responsibilities. Designing and offering such programs requires collaboration between the graduate school and the corporate organization to provide education in the interests of the individual student that is both academically sound and professionally relevant.

Examples of Cooperative and Collaborative Activities

Examples of cooperative and collaborative activities between corporations and universities can include those that follow.

☐ **Programs that relate academic study to corporate advancement**

It is not unusual for the achievement of a graduate degree to lead to advancement within the corporation. Indeed, holding or earning a master's degree is often a prerequisite to certain managerial levels. And it is always a competitive advantage, even a necessity, for managers seeking advancement to have or be on their way to having a master's degree. Except for a relatively small proportion of fast-track managers, however, moving toward an advanced degree is not seen as an integral part of job responsibilities. While many corporations are funding such graduate study for their managerial employees, some are raising questions about the value of that investment. Such questioning occurs in relation to the relevance of graduate courses to the goals and objectives of the corporation. While recognizing the power of graduate study opportunities to enhance the morale of young managers, some corporations face with trepidation the possibility that funding the advanced education of a manager may make him or her more marketable elsewhere. This is particularly problematic in information technology fields where there is a shortage of personnel trained in the newer technologies.

Usually the young professional seeks academic study via evening or weekend classes leading to a degree. Institutions such as the University of St. Thomas of Minneapolis or the University of Phoenix are examples of graduate schools that offer evening and/or weekend programs to meet this need. An alternative approach, used by The Graduate School of America, uses an independent study format and asynchronous on-line courses to allow managers to fit their academic pursuits even more closely to their work and schedules. Essential to this approach is a curriculum that encourages graduate learners to use real management projects to fulfill the academic requirements of graduate courses. For example, if a manager is assigned the work task of preparing a marketing survey, the activity can, with the agreement of the course instructor, be incorporated into the knowledge demonstrations of the course and become an essential component for course credit. This model seeks to bring out and amplify the theoretical dimensions of the management activity through the application of critical analysis based on research, and at the same time to focus the academic activities of the course on matters of practical professional importance.

☐ **Programs that build upon corporate training to award academic credit at the graduate level**

For too long, colleges and universities (and to a lesser extent corporations themselves), have considered training and education to be fundamentally different. Training was seen as skill acquisition for relatively well-defined activities, while education led to the acquisition of broader knowledge and more general abilities such as critical thinking. That distinction between corporate training and education is becoming less clear for mid-career professionals. As more graduate institutions are recognizing the need to establish cooperative relationships with corporations to provide the programs that corporations need to enhance and supplement corporate training, the notion that training and education are clearly distinct becomes less tenable.

Herein lies a problem that must be overcome if corporations and graduate institutions are to establish effective cooperative and collaborative relationships. When corporate representatives invite universities to cooperate in the development and offering of graduate programs for employees, jurisdictional disputes often cloud the cooperative relationship. Faculty who feel the need to control the curriculum often assert that only the faculty know best what should be offered as part of a curriculum. Corporate representatives, under pressure to provide education and training that is useful to the company and that can be justified in terms of immediate productivity, find many course offerings to be irrelevant and needlessly theoretical. This set of contrasting attitudes has limited the effectiveness of collaboration. It has also led to frustration on the part of college faculty who tend to see corporate training as worthy of only continuing education credit. Corporate representatives in response tend to see academic education as at best peripheral to what they are trying to accomplish.

TGSA is experimenting with putting corporate training seminars together with on-line academic study to lead to graduate credit. This is being done in a collaborative project with a corporation specializing in multimedia training for corporations. The first such course combines standup training in instructional design with an advanced on-line seminar in instructional technology. Initial assessment suggests that the collaborative approach is more attractive to potential students and more likely to be funded by corporate sponsors.

☐ **Programs that use corporate and institutional Intranets as well as the Internet to deliver high quality graduate education**

It is but a short step from offering training over the Internet and through corporate Intranets to the desktop of managers to offering them the opportunity to use these same methods for graduate study. TGSA currently offers three master's degrees via the Internet, and the University of Phoenix offers an on-line MBA degree through its own wide area network. Whether students make use of these educational opportunities during off-hours or in conjunction with job responsibilities as described above, the power of corporate Intranets to deliver high quality education is only now being fully realized. The convenience of access at any time is only one of the many advantages of on-line technology for both training and education. The vast resources of the Internet can be searched (assuming corporate security considerations permit) and information and learning exercises can be easily updated as ideas change. In addition, on-line communication systems foster both asynchronous group discussion among participants in courses and individualized access to an expert instructor. Perhaps the most important future development of on-line training systems, as they are put to the service of graduate education, will be the development of comprehensive assessment and record-keeping systems that will allow corporations to evaluate training and education at several levels. Not only will it be possible to assess the reactions of participants to on-line programs and the immediate learning that takes place, but also the extent to which training and education have an influence on subsequent job performance.

Principles of Good Practice

In order to be successful in developing and implementing collaborative programs, colleges and universities need to follow certain principles of good practice.

☐ **Use appropriate methods of determining and understanding the needs of corporations**

Before any program is developed at The Graduate School of America, we carry out an intensive needs assessment to determine whether resources should be devoted to it. This needs assessment consists of:

○ an environmental scan to determine if there is a societal need for the program

○ a review of current accredited programs that may be offering similar study so as to avoid needless duplication and/or competition

○ an analysis of the availability of appropriate faculty resources to provide the kind of education that is desired

Applying this process to collaborative arrangements with corporations requires intensive discussion over a significant period of time with potential corporate sponsors to assure that the program will not only be academically rigorous but also will serve the needs of the corporation. The developmental approach that we bring to bear is one of listening closely to what is needed and then adapting our academic offerings to meet the need. Our experience has shown that potential corporate sponsors desire programs with a high degree of academic integrity as well as relevance and practicality. It is in this collaborative interaction that we have found it both possible and beneficial to adopt an attitude of flexibility. While the university retains ultimate academic responsibility and is recognized by the corporation as the expert on how material is to be delivered, the corporation's needs weigh heavily in content that is to be taught. It has been our experience that, far from rejecting theoretical and research material that might be considered too academic, corporate sponsors welcome such material when it is relevant and is delivered in an effective manner.

☐ **Build academic programs on the principles of adult learning in corporate settings**

Graduate programs that focus on adult learners find that applying principles of adult learning may be even more important in corporate programs than it is in the regular curriculum. If graduate institutions are to serve active mid-career professionals with busy schedules and demanding priorities, then the education must be effective in ways that fit well with accepted principles of adult learning. Table 1 shows how several adult learning principles are applied to graduate education in corporate settings.

Principle	Corporate Application
Respect for knowledge and experience of the learner	Mid-career professionals and especially corporate managers bring to graduate study a wealth of skills, knowledge, and experience. In information technology fields, for example, professionals and managers routinely use and develop strategies that are more state-of-the-art than those being studied at major research institutions. That expertise needs to be recognized, honored, and used as the basis for further study. Repetition of basic (and even obsolete) information should be avoided.
Relevance to work and life	Adult learners thrive on education that is useful to them in their work and in their life. If theoretical material is to be seen as relevant, it must be connected clearly to the practical world in which their priorities and responsibilities exist. For corporate learners, their job responsibilities offer a perfect match. It becomes the task of academic programs to extend and amplify professional performance through enhancement of critical thinking.
Fit with adult lifestyle	Adult learners need educational programs that can be offered at times and in places that fit with their busy lives. Education that can integrate with needs of home, work, and individual development have the best chance of being effective. The popularity of evening and weekend programs as well as the great potential of online education derives from this ability to fit.
Active learning is preferable to passive learning	Research on adult learners has shown that learning is proportionately greater as it involves more learning modalities. While adult learners appreciate effective presentations and derive great benefit from well-prepared and well-delivered lectures, they tend to stay more involved and to remember better those activities that engage them actively. Searching for problem solutions, collaborating on team projects, and taking part in simulations or case analyses are more effective ways of engaging and involving corporate professionals in educational programs.

Table 1

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☐ **Develop appropriate methods of assessing knowledge and competence in corporate settings**

Universities seeking to establish cooperative and collaborative educational programs with corporations must become aware of the priorities, procedures, and standards of assessment that are appropriate to corporations. The context of test-taking and the evaluation of written papers in typical graduate study are significantly different from the more focused and practical strategies employed by corporations. By and large, managers are evaluated in terms of the results they are able to bring about, usually working through other people. Graduate students, by contrast, are evaluated in terms of their critical thinking ability and power of written expression. In academic courses that use actual work projects as the basis of evaluation, it may be useful to experiment with assessment strategies that go beyond faculty review of written work. Independent assessments of knowledge demonstrated by a given project as well as its impact on corporate performance may be used to supplement traditional reviews of written work to make the assessment process more useful to both learner and corporate client. It is an area where collaborative research could pay substantial dividends.

The Role of Accreditation in Collaborative Relationships

There is an important role for the accrediting association and for the accreditation process itself in fostering collaborative relationships between corporations and institutions of higher education. This role involves reviewing the concepts surrounding such collaborations and adapting the criteria for accreditation and the process of self-study to fit the new realities. NCA's recent inclusion of a review criterion addressing institutional integrity offers to both institutions and corporations principles that can guide how such arrangements may be negotiated. This assures that they preserve both the fiscal stability of the higher education institution and the academic quality of any programs offered. The current requirement that all North Central institutions develop and implement plans for the assessment of student learning outcomes can help establish a commonality of language and objectives with corporations whose main focus is on managerial competence and worker productivity. And finally, the process of self-study itself can offer higher education institutions the opportunity to benefit from thorough and planned review of collaborative programs with corporations. The North Central Association's avowed willingness to assist institutions in experimenting with alternative forms of self-study will allow them to experiment with institutional review and planning processes such as Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) or evaluations related to the Baldrige award competition.

Conclusion

Societal demands have brought about the realization of collaboration between the corporate world and the academy. Regional accrediting standards provide guidelines to ensure quality in such endeavors. These collaborations serve the learner by respecting his or her knowledge, life style, and learning styles. They serve the corporate world by enhancing the skills and knowledge of the workforce. And they serve the academy by providing exciting new venues for educational pursuits. These collaborations have the potential to be a true win-win situation.

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Partners with a Goal: Multi-Directional Collaboration in Information Systems Education

Susan M. Guthrie
Anita M. Krsak

Introduction

Information Systems programs in higher education face an ongoing challenge: meeting business and industry demands for trained workers in the rapidly changing computer field. Essential hardware and software upgrades and the necessity for continuing faculty development and support result in programs that are very demanding on institutional resources. Moreover, there is a strong need for ongoing, responsive curriculum additions and enhancements and for student recruitment efforts to meet employment needs of area businesses.

Lakeland Community College's Information Systems department currently participates in several collaborative "partnerships" that help meet its needs and benefit the partners as well. Our experiences with these collaborative efforts may provide ideas and contacts for other institutions that are maintaining or developing quality computer instruction in the face of limited resources. Such efforts benefit all parties involved, particularly students.

The purpose of this paper is to provide background and contact information regarding several national-level partnering opportunities in Information Systems education. It is meant to supplement a presentation that will focus on the processes involved in establishing cooperatives including the identification of mutual goals, advantages and disadvantages of various partnership terms, and suggestions for different types of local partnerships.

Background

Lakeland Community College is located in the suburbs of Cleveland, Ohio, and serves approximately 14,000 full- and part-time students annually. The mission of the institution stresses the desire to "provide technical and professional programs that will permit students to acquire specific skills leading to employment, a certificate, advancement if currently employed, or transfer to four-year colleges and universities."

In support of this mission, the Information Systems Program consists of five degree options and six certificates, each designed to provide for the development of skills leading to employment or advancement in the computer field. Individual courses are also often taken by students to enhance skills in a variety of areas. The degree and certificate programs consist of the following options: C/C++ Programming, Multi-platform Programming (specializing in mainframe COBOL), RPG/Midrange (using the IBM AS/400 computer system), Microcomputer Specialist, and Networking (including Novell and Windows NT).

The department is staffed by eleven full-time faculty members who teach approximately forty percent of course sections offered. The remaining course sections are taught by part-time faculty.

Existing Collaborations

Existing collaborations that work towards meeting common goals of Lakeland, the Information Systems department, and the partners involved include:

- ○ Tech Prep
- ○ Other High School Articulation Agreements
- ○ Novell Educational Academic Partnership (NEAP)
- ○ Microsoft Academic Cooperative
- ○ Microsoft Authorized Academic Training Program (AATP)
- ○ IBM AS/400 Division Partners in Education
- ○ IBM Higher Education Software Consortium (HESC)
- ○ Local Business Partnerships

The following summarizes the purpose of several of the national partnerships and includes contact information:

☐ **Tech Prep**

Established and funded by the Federal Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act of 1990, Tech Prep is an educational reform initiative that has brought together educators and business and industry representatives. A goal is to educate students effectively and efficiently for participation in technology-related careers through a competency-based program of both secondary (grades 11 and 12) and higher education experiences. To be eligible for Tech Prep funding, seven elements are prescribed:

- ○ articulation agreements
- ○ appropriate structure through a competency-based curriculum
- ○ an integrated and applied curriculum
- ○ joint in-service training for both secondary and postsecondary educators
- ○ counselor training
- ○ equal access for special populations and students of color
- ○ preparatory services that assist individuals in selection of or preparation for participation in Tech Prep programs

For more information about Tech Prep programs, contact your state department of education.

☐ **Novell Education Academic Partnership (NEAP)**

Novell is the world's leading network software provider. It created the NEAP program in 1992 to bring the vendor's technical training program, which leads globally-recognized certification, to colleges, universities, and trade schools. NEAP has focused on programs for *Certified Network Administrator (CNA)* and *Certified Network Engineer (CNE)* certifications, which have become common requirements for networking jobs. The NEAP program has grown to include more than 150 schools worldwide. In order to participate, schools must apply and agree to meet the following requirements:

- ○ use only Novell authorized courseware
- ○ ensure that instructors have obtained Certified Novell Instructor (CNI) status before teaching a Novell authorized course
- ○ adhere to hardware and software requirements prescribed by Novell Education
- ○ offer Novell courses as part of a regular academic degree or certificate program

- encourage students to complete one or more Novell certifications
- peep up-to-date on policy and handbook information
- purchase a NEAP Starter Kit for $895

Schools interested in participating can view a complete program description on the World Wide Web at http://education.novell.com/chaninfo/neap.htm The application and approval process is managed by ITP/Southwestern. Novell can be contácted at (800) 871-5445.

☐ **Microsoft Academic Cooperative**

An Internet-based resource center, the Microsoft Academic Cooperative recognizes that computer science, engineering, and information systems educators need tools to create and maintain a state-of-the-art learning environment. Its services include special software licensing and academic pricing, an instructional grant program, a curriculum project in which institutions share information about their courses and programs, a faculty speaker's bureau, and an Internet mailing list.

- Information about the project, including the instructional grant program, is available on the World Wide Web at http://academiccoop.isu.collegehome.html
- Questions about grants can be directed to GrantQuestion@academiccoop.isu.edu

☐ **Microsoft Authorized Academic Training Program**

Microsoft, the global leader in personal computer software, has also developed a partnership with colleges to facilitate the delivery of courseware to prepare students for Microsoft product certification. Microsoft-certified professionals are able to command premium salaries from small to large companies since there is a shortage of certified workers to fill job openings. Microsoft certifications include:

- *Microsoft Certified Systems Engineers (MCSE)*–experts in design installation, support, and troubleshooting of information systems
- *Microsoft Certified Solution Developers*–experts in the use of Microsoft tools and platforms to create business solutions
- *Microsoft Product Specialists*–experts in at least one Microsoft operating system. Some also specialize in other Microsoft products, development tools, or desktop applications

Institutions must adhere to the following requirements:

- be an accredited institution or an Educational Service Center
- deliver training to any student of the institution
- do not enter into an agreement with a business to train employees of that organization
- use Microsoft approved courseware (Microsoft Official Curriculum or Microsoft Approved Study Guides developed by third-party publishers)
- use instructors who pass Microsoft Certified Professional or Microsoft Certified Trainer exams for the course being taught
- deliver a Microsoft certification course in no more than 12 hours per week, including lab time
- meet hardware and facility requirements
- require students to complete student evaluations at the end of each class
- agree to site inspections and audits by Microsoft
- complete a program application and sign a legal document

Organizations interested in the program can read or download a program guide on the World Wide Web at http://www.microsoft.com/partnering/aatp/, e-mail to aatp@MSPrograms.com, or call (800) 508-8454.

☐ IBM AS/400 Division Partners in Education

The AS/400 is the world's most popular multi-user business computing system with more than 450,000 systems worldwide and more than sixteen million users. Partners in Education is a program designed to work with colleges, universities and technical schools to develop and expand AS/400 awareness and skills base to meet current and future market needs. Because of a shortage of trained computer professionals, IBM is actively recruiting schools to participate in this program. Benefits include:

- membership in the IBM sponsored college AS/400 Roundtable group, an active group of schools offering AS/400 curriculum that meet on an annual basis and communicate through an e-mail listserv
- assistance with faculty education
- curriculum developed by AS/400 college educators
- an equipment program that provides an AS/400 computer either free or at a substantial price reduction along with free software
- discount on hardware maintenance for CPUs used for curriculum development/delivery

Requirements for the equipment program include sponsorship by one or more local IBM Business Partners and/or AS/400 customers to ensure local business support of the school's program. Local business partners are expected to assist with installation and support.

Information about the AS/400 Roundtable can be obtained from the World Wide Web at http://www.as400education.com. Information about Partners in Education can be received from:

IBM Corporation
Partners in Education
3605 Highway 52 North
Rochester MN 55902
e-mail: pie@vnet.ibm.com

☐ IBM Higher Education Software Consortium (HESC)

First announced in June, 1988, the IBM HESC is designed to stimulate the use of computer technology in academic instruction and research. Accredited institutions of higher education approved for the IBM Educational Allowance are eligible for consortium membership. Members may order IBM licensed programs from selected groups with license fees waived. Groups include operating systems; other system software; and application software for mainframe, midrange, and PC platforms. A one-time membership fee is charged, based on the number of full-time faculty at the institution. An annual fee is charged for each selected group. A Technical Support Coordinator must be identified as a point-of-contact between the school and IBM. An additional requirement is that 80–100% of each software program's usage must be for academic instruction and/or academic research depending on the group.

Information is available on the World Wide Web at http://www.hied.ibm.com

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Industry Validation: Job Task Analysis

JoAnn Simser
Bruce Peterson

Using a Job Task Analysis process, industry representatives identify the duties and tasks performed by expert workers and the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to be successful in the industry. Northwest Technical College uses the resulting information to update and validate graduate outcomes and curriculum in existing programs and to develop new programs. Faculty and administration select appropriate general and technical education, develop learning activities, plan faculty continuing education, and update technology and equipment based on this information. Student academic achievement is measured in relation to outcomes consistent with the needs of the occupation.

Introduction

A hallmark of the technical college system has been to assure the connection of education to industry—striving to keep curriculum current with advanced technologies and changing to match the fast pace of industry.

Four years ago Northwest Technical College participated in a training program provided by the Minnesota State Board of Technical Colleges called "Job Task Identification." The intent of the process was to provide assistance to businesses and industries that are reorganizing to make certain that workflow can continue and improve during and after the reorganization process.

The Job Task Identification process was jointly developed by the Minnesota State Board of Technical Colleges and the 3M Corporation. At the time of development, 3M was in the process of downsizing the corporation. In restructuring their production processes, by using this process and involving the people who were doing the work, they were able to adjust the size of the workforce and still assure that the production process would continue.

Following the training session, staff from the college revised the model and adopted it for use in curriculum development and review. Now the process is known as Job Task Analysis within the college and is used extensively as a link between the educational programs and industry.

Institutional Profile

Northwest Technical College is a five campus regional technical college located in the northwest corner of Minnesota. The campuses are located in five cities located from 45 to 165 miles apart. The college offers 153 technical programs across the campuses. The programs of the college are divided into four instructional divisions: Allied Health, Applied Technology, Business, and Professional Services and Trades. All of these are supported by a fifth division of General Education. The college offers certificate, diploma, and Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree programs. General education courses in AAS degree programs are provided to students through cooperative agreements with regional community colleges and universities.

The Job Task Analysis Process

The job task analysis process involves several phases: a focus group to create a job task identification chart, verification, validation, an industry questionnaire, meeting with faculty and content experts to develop or revise curriculum, and review by program advisory committees.

◇ **Job Task Identification Chart.** The process begins with selecting a representative group of people from industry for the expert panel to create a job task identification chart for an occupation or cluster of occupations. These people are those currently filling the positions and/or the direct supervisor. (Important here is being sure that the panel consists primarily of the employees currently in the position and includes only a small number of supervisors.) The instructional staff of the college provides a list of possible participants to contact. Other names are identified from college staff in corporate relations through their connections with industry. The date and location are selected, and invitations are sent to potential participants. The goal is to have an expert committee of six to ten people. In the focus group session the expert panel defines the position title and description, and identifies the duties of the position and tasks performed in each duty area. Further, the panel identifies the required skills and knowledge; behavior, traits and attitudes; special tools and equipment; terminology and acronyms; and safety considerations of the incumbent worker. This information is gathered using brainstorming, small group activities, and charting through a facilitated nominal group process. Faculty are encouraged to observe these sessions.

◇ **Verification.** The Job Task Identification Chart is constructed and mailed, with a verification form, to the participants, who are requested to sign and return it. The verification form confirms that this is indeed the information they provided and invites any changes or corrections.

◇ **Validation.** A validation survey is then constructed based upon the duties, skills and knowledge, and behaviors listed on the chart. Respondents are asked to indicate the importance and frequency of or expected competency for each item. The survey is mailed to a broader employer or industry group, and results are compiled in a spreadsheet format. This process provides the college with a validation of the chart, input from a broader base, and an indication of the priority of each item.

◇ **Questionnaire.** Along with the survey, employers and industry representatives are sent a questionnaire asking them to indicate if they are willing to provide faculty or student internships, guest speakers, field trips or observations, support in the form of equipment use or donation, or advisory committee members.

◇ **Curriculum review or development.** The Dean of Academic Affairs and Corporate Relations or the Curriculum Specialist then meets with faculty to review the job task identification chart and make recommendations on program titles, outcomes, prerequisites, requirements for graduation, general education and technical courses, learning activities, opportunities for program development, articulation agreements, equipment, and faculty professional development. In new program development, the job task analysis is included in the application for approval to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board. It is used by the college to select the appropriate required and elective general education and technical courses, develop new courses, and identify potential advisory committee members and internship sites. Curriculum in the technical college is reviewed by a program advisory committee consisting of industry representatives, employers, and graduates.

Implementation within the College

Over the past three years, the college commitment has been to conduct a job task analysis for each program area. Currently we have developed charts for 62 program or related program clusters. The goal is to have all current programs of the college validated through this process and to use the process in the development of all new programs. The Deans for Academic Affairs and Corporate Relations are developing schedules to reevaluate each program on an ongoing basis every three years.

As the college is now converting curriculum to deliver in semester rather than quarter terms, the job task analysis results are being used as the foundation for evaluating curriculum plans. Each faculty group is validating that the information gathered through the job task analysis is included in the curriculum as they write new semester courses. The job task analysis results are used as an internal document along with program accreditation, licensure, or certification requirements, results from graduate and employer surveys, internships, and advisory committee input to ensure the curriculum is meeting the standards of the industry.

Another key factor is training of facilitators for the process. NTC has developed a training process that prepares additional personnel to facilitate focus groups of industry experts to create the job task identification chart. The training session includes a concentrated package outlining all aspects of the process, tips and recommendations on handling difficult situations. Following that training, the new facilitators conduct a Job Task session under the watchful eye of the trainers. Each Job Task Identification Chart session is to be conducted by a pair of trained facilitators.

Recognition of this process has been far reaching. Our skilled facilitators have been called upon to conduct Job Task Analysis for business and industry for their internal use. We have also performed workshops for industry associations seeking to provide some standard for positions in their member businesses.

Analysis of Gathered Materials

Currently the college is in the process of compiling the information from the Job Task Identification Charts. This process is helping to identify the common needs across all program areas. As a result, we will be developing core competencies for the college. These core competencies will then be infused in all programs and course applications of each competency area will be identified.

The competencies identified in the Job Task Analysis can be compared and aligned with other skill standards and competencies such as professional associations and program accreditation groups, Minnesota High School Graduation Outcomes, and the SCANS (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) skills.

The Benefits

This collaboration with industry has resulted in several opportunities for the college, such as internships for students and faculty, industry demonstrations and presentations at the college, college inservice and courses for industry, and the potential for locating company branches near college locations. The growing link to business and industry in the region results in enhanced employment opportunities for graduates of the college. An increased respect of the educational process by businesses and community groups results in their greater utilization of resources available from the college.

The benefits to industry have also been substantial. The participants are more aware of what is included in the educational programs. Their willingness to provide internship sites for the students has greatly enhanced the students educational process. Further, as a result of participation in internship programs, many graduates have received employment offers from the company. Thus, the industry recruits qualified, informed employees.

Another great benefit has been the validation of curriculum. Most of the college's programs have found the process to be supportive of changes that have already been made, assuring currency in the industry. Others have identified areas for revisions and needs to eliminate some areas that are no longer needed in the educational programs.

Identified outcomes are beneficial in collaborating with educational partners—implementing 2+2 programs, articulation agreements with baccalaureate programs, and Tech Prep agreements with high schools. Faculty may access curriculum and instructional materials developed for identified skill standards.

The Future

As previously mentioned, our college plan includes a continued rotation to review programs through the process. Each program will be scheduled to be reviewed every three years. This effort, along with use of advisory committees, will assist in providing the assurance of currency with industry standards. Currency with industry will enhance graduates' abilities to compete in the workplace and improve their employability and quality of life.

As we build our college student academic achievement plan, we have already identified the Job Task Analysis as a foundation piece for building the plan. It is our intention that program outcomes will be focused on the materials gathered from these sessions. As a result, student, graduate, and employer surveys will be based on the college, program, and course outcomes aligned with the Job Task Analysis.

We expect that the Job Task Analysis process will continue to improve Northwest Technical College's ability to collaborate with business and industry and with our partner educational systems to improve students' accessibility to life long learning.

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Bruce Peterson is Dean of Academic Affairs at Northwest Technical College.

Industrial Partnerships: Cause Something to Happen

Barbara Stringfellow
L. Kay Stroud

Cossatot's Approach

A partnership is, according to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, "...where each party agrees to furnish parts and labor for a business enterprise by which each shares in profits and losses." Partnerships are successful to the extent that they meet the individual needs of each party more successfully than the party could meet them on its own. Cossatot Technical College and the industries in its service area achieved this partnership. The process took time, commitment, and dedication of human and financial resources.

If your institution wants to work closely with business and industry in providing training or skill enhancement, the question needs to be asked, "Do we want to provide a service, or do we want to form a partnership?" Cossatot Technical College wanted a partnership. Our goal was to "be a partner in industrial training," not just a provider.

What CTC did to become a partner was to develop a team approach where each stakeholder is part of the team. This is not your ordinary team, but a team made up of rival companies and rival departments of an education community. Yet it works. It works because of the forward thinking of each person on the team. Each knows that, to be truly successful, differences have to be set aside for the good of the team. Sitting at the table during discussion are representatives from every business or industry that we serve, Cossatot's Workforce Development Center, Adult Education, JTPA, Employment Security, Tech Prep, Office of Apprenticeship, and Technical Education.

Often institutions of higher education approach business and industry with a "shoe box" of knowledge. This knowledge comes in a certificate or degree plan only. If this approach is taken with industry trainers and human resource managers, institutions will find that they are only providing a service to the employees of the industry, not forming partnerships with the industry.

Most often, CTC has found that industry management does not want an intensive 16-week philosophical semester of training; they want a compressed four-to-five week session, specifically designed to meet their immediate needs. The material has to be presented in a way that provides the industry immediate results. A practical, hands-on learning environment is vital to show the daily application of the material being presented. Flexibility and training designed specifically for an industrial partner are critical.

Cossatot has found the most effective approach for the industries in our area is to let the industries tell us what they want. We then work to tailor the learning process to meet their stated needs. The philosophy, "the customer knows best," works in our area. The industries in our area are not dependent on CTC to provide all the training. Within an 80-mile radius are three technical or community colleges, two four-year institutions, and a host of in-house trainers and consultants.

Satisfied customers result in repeat business, so CTC believes that this measure of effectively providing the type and quality of training industry wants proves that the "partnerships" exist.

The approach to developing a partnership is to get together and let each side tell what it expects from the agreement; what each can and cannot do; what each wants and does not want; and what outcome is expected. The following outline has worked well for the past three years and we believe that it will continue to work for new industries as they locate in our area:

- ○ Initiate contact with the industry, either with the Industrial Trainer or the Human Resource Manager.
- ○ Listen to the customer's concerns, wants, and needs.
- ○ Evaluate your institution's ability (or desire) to provide the desired training.
- ○ Determine how much training is required to meet the industry's needs. (This may require a job task analysis, WorkKeys profile, testing of employees to find basic skill level and/or remediation of basic skills).
- ○ Identify a qualified trainer.
- ○ Have the trainer and industry representative meet to clarify the goals for training.
- ○ Determine a realistic timeline suitable to both parties.
- ○ Conduct the necessary training.
- ○ Conduct evaluations of the training session(s).
- ○ Follow up with the industry representative.

These steps may seem simplistic, but they are the only steps that work consistently to ensure that the needs of the industry are being met, the integrity of the college is not compromised, and a partnership is forged. Our success is evident through the increase in service provided based on our partnerships. The following table represents the increases in the numbers of students in departments that are involved with industrial partners.

Developments with Industrial Partners	1995	1996	1997
Adult Education/Workplace Education	630	788	1088
Workplace Education Center	did not exist	1301	1145
Business & Industry/Workforce Development Center	208	712	1160

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The Shadow College as a Catalyst for Institutional Renewal

James Jacobs
Roberta Teahen

In "The Shadow College and NCA Accreditation: A Conceptual Framework" (Jacobs & Teahen 1997), we argued that the growth of the Shadow College provided an important new challenge for organizations, such as the NCA. In highlighting its importance, we noted that *"the Shadow College is an organizational manifestation"* of several forces affecting the community college, such as serving diverse constituencies and needs for innovation.

We suggested that NCA should review Shadow Colleges at community, institutional, instructional, and individual levels. The purpose of this paper is to review the potential for and barriers to institutional and instructional level advances resulting from the activities of the Shadow College. One vital aspect of this process, in our opinion, is the extent to which collaboration and institutional culture are used as *strategies* for institutional growth and innovation diffusion. With the continuing trends of heightened expectations, decreasing enrollments, demands for lifelong workforce development programming, and increasing competition, these are not simply "good" or useful strategies that might be pursued; rather, they are essential for the continued relevance of the institution and its growth as a learning organization.

Our argument is based on our understanding of learning organizations, collaboration, and innovation, as these concepts emerge from the writings of organizational theorists such as Peter Senge, Rosabeth Kanter, and Margaret Wheatley, among others. Our rationale is based on the expectation that as institutions of higher education, colleges must model learning organization behaviors. Our underlying assumption is that effective Shadow Colleges model many of the best practices of a learning organization and as such can serve as significant forces for institutional renewal. In 1997 we wrote:

> Our argument is that the traditional credit instruction becomes stronger and grows when the Shadow College exists and its potential is maximized…The more NCA recognizes this, the better it will be understood by evaluators. Thus will the accreditation process advance the evolution of learning leadership in the North Central region's community colleges (Jacobs & Teahen 1997).

Reinforcing this viewpoint, Steven Crow, Executive Director of the North Central Association's Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, writes:

> The demand on higher education is to find ways to ensure the quality of education even as it opens the opportunity for education to all wherever they might be. The challenge for the Commission is to recognize the need of institutions to respond to these new educational needs, learn from the creative responses our institutions make, and then collaboratively develop appropriate measures of quality for these new educational settings and environments. If we ignore the "shadow colleges," we ignore the full range of learning experiences now provided by our institutions; in so doing, we fail to appreciate what can be learned from them that might reshape our measurements of the effectiveness of education (Crow 1997).

Despite the interest in the activities of the Shadow College and the growing recognition that these activities are significant for the future of higher education institutions, often within colleges, the Shadow College units play a marginal role in the leadership of the institution. Many Shadow College personnel are "strangers in their own land." They frequently lack the organizational legitimacy that comes with occupying positions of power, engagement in historically powerful discipline hierarchies, or access to institutional resources. Quite the opposite, Shadow College personnel often have high productivity expectations, which result in higher teaching/training/contact assignments and little time to become engaged in campus governance or strategic planning.

There are many ways to explain this apparent lack of organizational power or "social capital." These are new positions that have not been recognized by the organizational or political structure of the colleges. In addition, many of the staff in Shadow College positions have been recruited from outside of the academy, so they do not possess the degrees nor do they share the same cultural background of many administrators who generally emerge from academic instructional backgrounds. While these factors reflect the current status, the translation of innovators' experiences into the organization's intellectual capital is a subject attracting the attention of many writers.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter refers to the slogan, "Let a thousand flowers bloom," as an apt metaphor for innovation. She writes:

> Innovations, like flowers, start from tiny seeds and have to be nurtured carefully until they blossom; then their essence has to be carried elsewhere for the flowers to spread. And some conditions—soil, climate, fertilizer, the layout of the garden—produce larger and more abundant flowers (Kanter 1996).

Although many writers contend that innovation often occurs despite the organization, Kanter concludes from her research that

> Organizational conditions—structure and social arrangements—can actively stimulate and produce innovation, as long as those conditions take into account the "organic," "natural," and even the "wild" side of innovation. Innovation is the creation and exploitation of new ideas. At its very root, the entrepreneurial process of innovation and change is at odds with the administrative process of ensuring repetitions of the past. The development of innovation requires a different set of practices and different modes of organization than the management of ongoing, established operations where the desire for or expectation of change is minimal (Kanter 1996).

We contend that innovation in organizations, including the transfer of knowledge and experience from Shadow Colleges to the mainstream college, in large part does not occur because the college is continuing to attend to the management of its ongoing, established operations "...where the expectation for change is minimal." Kanter notes that innovation crosses boundaries and that there is evidence that many of the best ideas are interdisciplinary, a concept that educators are just beginning to embrace as the interest in interdisciplinary studies and integrated curriculum is expanding. However, organizationally, Shadow College activities are typically unrelated to the main college functions. Little evidence will be found that identifies ways in which the "intelligence" gained through shadow-college activities is fed back into the system. Few examples of collaborative work between Shadow College personnel and regular faculty will be found.

In our 1997 paper, we suggested that among the questions evaluators should ask is this one: "How does the Shadow College develop the capacity of the institution to deliver services in all parts of the system more effectively?" (Jacobs & Teahen 1997)

If institutional capacity is to be increased, then collaboration must be more widespread. Rather than simply viewing collaboration as something that is useful "to get things done," i.e., to use the strengths of the prospective collaborator as a means of more efficiently obtaining a desired objective or end goal, for us collaboration suggests a mutually reinforcing process by which interactions with partners (collaborators) redefine the goal, and ultimately the institution. In brief, collaboration becomes part of the process of organizational change. The organizational change results from the learning acquired from the interactions. An upward spiral of learning followed by growth is demonstrated, which is not unlike that which results as individuals learn and would seem to be characteristic of a "learning organization."

To place this abstract discussion of collaboration into a real context, let us assume that one of the reasons for an institution of higher education to collaborate with business and industry is so that the students, faculty, and administration will obtain the perspective of a non-educational organization. This will be useful so that the curriculum will meet the needs of the external organization (typically the prospective employer), the students will attain or retain jobs, and employers will be more satisfied with the performance of the educational institution.

All of these outcomes may result, but they may not be the most important outcome or value added. In an ideal collaborative relationship, the educational institution will alter its programs and even its practices. In addition, the businesses may begin to change their perceptions and alter their relationships with the educational institutions. The original collaboration should give way to another and perhaps more complex interaction as both organizations become redefined in the process.

For higher education organizations, this interaction is precisely what is needed for organizational renewal in all areas of the college's curricula and delivery systems. Collaboration is necessary not simply to add the "perspective" of business and industry; through business collaboration, the practices of the educational institutions will be altered, and they should reflect not only the college's realities more clearly, but be more effective in the advancement of a learning organization.

Returning to the research that supports this example and the point of view it espouses, we refer to a statement that Kanter makes:

> Close customer or user contact is an important innovation activator. Effective innovation thus derives from active awareness of changing user needs and sometimes from direct user demands or solutions. Therefore, structural arrangements and social patterns that facilitate contact across boundaries, between potential innovators and their "market," help produce more innovation. **Potential innovators benefit from being linked directly to the market, to gain a fuller personal appreciation for what users need, as well as from being connected with those functions inside the organization that manage the interface with the outside** (emphasis added) (Kanter 1996).

It is the personnel of the Shadow College who typically maintain the closest ties to the college's market. They are engaged with current workers, employers, community-based organizations, governmental agencies, and others. Their daily interactions acquaint them in real-time with the needs of the community. How does this information get translated internally? Are there effective vehicles for information sharing? More important, to what extent are college faculty and administrators engaged in genuine collaboratives with external partners or "customers?"

In a period when all information cannot be assimilated and known by one institution and certainly not by any one individual, internal and external collaboration is the only hope for producing the most effective community college. This brings us to the final issue for consideration in this paper. In what ways does the organization encourage innovation and collaboration? What is the culture? What meanings, assumptions, values, understandings, and rituals are shared?

The organization is its people. The actions of the people result from individuals' interactions with the culture. How do leaders support or encourage innovative practices? What systems are in place for feedback from the collaborative activities of the institution? What is valued in the organization? How easy is it to get new course or program approvals? How many major curricular innovations are evident? Who is rewarded? How are individuals rewarded or recognized? How consistent are the messages?

Kanter writes:

> Overall, I argue that the generation of new ideas that activates innovation is facilitated by organizational complexity: diversity and breadth of experience, including experts who have a great deal of contact with experts in other fields; links to users; and outsiders, openness to the environment; and integration across fields via intersecting territories, multiple communication links, and smaller interdisciplinary business units (Kanter 1996).

NCA consultant-evaluators, looking for signs of systems approaches that would support continuing improvement—the essence of the NCA criteria and the entire accreditation process—should explore the degree to which these linkages exist. What experts are the administrators and faculty connected to from other fields? How are these relationships operationalized? How open is the environment? What comprises the functional units of the college? Are there traditional disciplinary departmental boundaries, or are there interdisciplinary units? To what extent are functional, curricular, and/or services integration in evidence?

Although innovation and creativity result from some individual action, the success thereof is often dependent upon the organizational context. Learning organizations are places that support individual and collective learning.

> Building learning organizations involves developing people who learn to see as systems thinkers see, who develop their own personal mastery, and who learn how to surface and restructure mental models, collaboratively. Given the influence of organizations in today's world, this may be one of the most powerful steps toward helping us "rewrite the code," altering not just what we think but our predominant ways of thinking. In this sense, learning organizations may be a tool not just for the evolution of organizations, but for the evolution of intelligence (Senge 1990).

In 1997 we proposed the ISO 9000 process or Malcolm Baldrige criteria as methods that could prove useful in rethinking the organization's processes, including its core business—its instructional programs (whether credit or non-credit, group or individualized, on-site or distant). We continue to support that type of approach (although not necessarily either system specifically). The approaches are designed to build "customer" requirements into the planning. Feedback is a necessary component for each. Partnerships—substantive collaboratives—are required. And the customers' (the community's) requirements are well understood and constantly monitored. Future planning, development, and evaluative processes must assure that vital partners are strategically and substantively engaged with the institution and that the knowledge and wisdom gained are reflected in a changing organization. At our 1998 session, we will suggest additional potential dimensions of such an approach, including a challenge to the assumptions that may now underlie higher education's practices. The challenges are not only directed at our services but more fundamentally toward our ways of thinking.

The issues confronting higher education are not simple. Writing in *Images of Organization*, Gareth Morgan states:

> I believe that some of the most fundamental problems that we face stem from the fact that the complexity and sophistication of our thinking do not match the complexity and sophistication of the realities with which we have to deal...The result is that our actions are often simplistic, and at times downright harmful (Morgan 1996).

If there is any organization that should be able to respond to complex situations with complex solutions, it should be our higher education institutions, the places where the "learned" and the learning reside. To do so requires that we build on the experiences of all within our organization as well as those outside–that we engage in collaboration. It requires that we cross boundaries and build open partnerships with multiple others. It means that we seriously rethink the ways in which we return the "community" to our colleges in ways far more productive than just as students or advisors. It suggests that we rethink the meaning of institutional integrity.

In addressing innovation and collaboration, it is important to remember that throughout history, few educational innovations have been sustained (Pogrow 1996). Few innovations are successful in any context. Changing what we do and the way in which we do it requires destroying some aspects of our former being. This is rarely comfortable (Trice & Beyer 1993). Organizational theorists, in fact, suggest that it is nearly impossible to make fundamental changes in the current, which helps to explain the decline of bureaucratic organizations, the advancement of entrepreneurial ones, incentives for early retirement, and the nearly simultaneous downsizing and rehiring in the business sector. The organizational culture is fundamental to the college's ability to learn and to innovate.

The Shadow College could represent the flowers to nurture what Rosabeth Kanter speaks of:

> Making a thousand flowers bloom is not a fully random or accidental process, unless we are satisfied with spindly, fragile wildflowers. Instead, the flowers of innovation can be cultivated and encouraged to multiply in the gardens of organizations designed on the integrative model, organizations where the growth rhythm of innovation is well understood. (Kanter 1996).

Flowers rarely grow well in the shadows. Our challenge is to bring the flowers into the sunlight, to sow their seeds in the gardens of the organization.

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Chapter 4

NCA

Case Studies in Collaboration: Articulation Agreements, Contracts, and Academic Programs

THE Collaborative Imperative

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A Collaborative Model for Improving Statewide Access to Higher Education

Thomas H. Sawyer
Marnia Kennon

Few issues between higher education institutions are as problematic for collaboration as transfer. The issue is especially problematic in states in which transfer between two-year and four-year institutions historically has not been expected, encouraged, or supported. Such has been the case in Indiana: up until the late 1980s, its largest public two-year institution, Ivy Tech State College (then known as Indiana Vocational Technical College) was mandated to be a terminal, technical college. The mission of Ivy Tech was expanded to include transfer in 1987, but nine years later only nine percent of its degree programs transferred to Indiana's public universities. With more than 62,000 students, and 22 campuses, Ivy Tech is Indiana's third-largest public higher education institution.

Lack of access to transfer opportunities between the two-year technical college system and public universities is only part of the state's problem. Indiana ranks 47th in the nation in terms of the percentage of its adult population that has earned a bachelor's degree, yet ranks above the national average in terms of the production of baccalaureate degrees. Indiana has a highly productive higher education system, yet the state is losing its four-year college graduates.

To address these issues of lack of transfer opportunities and lagging educational attainment, Ivy Tech approached Indiana State University (ISU) in 1994 and proposed a wide-ranging institutional partnership. Their collaborative efforts have resulted in a variety of approaches to improving educational access, participation, and retention of an educated workforce across the state of Indiana. Vincennes University (VU), Indiana's only community college, with campuses in Vincennes, Jasper, and Indianapolis, joined in 1997. Vincennes has a long history of articulation with ISU.

Indiana State University (ISU), Ivy Tech, and Vincennes are working together to provide Indiana with greater access to higher education. The institutions have complementary programs and serve similar student populations. With their Schools of Technology, Business, Nursing, and Health and Human Performance, and College of Arts and Sciences, ISU offers bachelor's degree programs that provide maximum opportunities for articulation with the two-year technical degree programs offered by Ivy Tech and a variety of liberal arts programs offered by VU. ISU has a depth of experience providing degree programs statewide using distance technology. Building on these similarities and strengths, the two institutions have developed a collaborative partnership that is using 2+2 articulation agreements and distance education as the means of resolving some of the complex access issues Indiana faces.

The ISU-Ivy Tech Partnership

In 1994, a five-pronged strategy to increase affordable access to higher education in Indiana was outlined by Ivy Tech and ISU. VU became a participant in late 1997. These five strategies included:

1. **2+2 program articulations**—providing transfer between two-year and four-year technical degree programs
2. **Community-based baccalaureate completion opportunities**—allowing associate degree graduates to complete a bachelor's degree without relocating
3. **2+2+2 program articulations**—linking high school, Ivy Tech, and ISU offerings, and promoting technical education to high-school students

4. **A first-year experience program**—building opportunities for students not admitted to ISU to enroll at Ivy Tech and then bridge back to ISU
5. **Advanced degree opportunities**—providing opportunities for additional graduate work for Ivy Tech faculty and administrators

Initiatives for all five strategies are currently underway.

DegreeLink

DegreeLink is the marketing name given to that part of the ISU-Ivy Tech and ISU-VU partnership that involves statewide, baccalaureate degree completion opportunities. Program-to-program articulation agreements have been developed that will allow Ivy Tech or VU students to enter ISU as juniors and complete a bachelor's degree in business, health, and technical fields of study. ISU is providing opportunities to complete the last two years of high-demand, workforce-oriented baccalaureate programs across the state using an instructional mix of distance education technologies, such as one- and two-way video, video and audio tapes, audio-conferencing, e-mail, Internet, and audio-graphics.

Ivy Tech's 22 campuses are serving as the community-based center for the educational programming and services. Beginning in January 1998, the final two years of selected ISU baccalaureate programs are being provided via the Ivy Tech and VU campuses in a four-year sequence. The delivery and philosophy of these programs will be flexible and innovative in nature, serving the needs of time- and place-bound, working, adult students. ISU, Ivy Tech, and VU staff located in Ivy Tech campuses provide personal service and links to ISU's on-campus staff and faculty in Terre Haute. Ivy Tech and VU graduates may also elect to complete a bachelor's degree program at the ISU campus in Terre Haute, in the residential option of DegreeLink.

DegreeLink Target Audiences

The major target audience of the partnership is Ivy Tech and VU students and graduates who are seeking an education that is accessible, affordable, and achievable. These are primarily adults placebound by their family, employment, and educational ties to their home community. This is an audience that collectively represents a group that has not been participating in Indiana's four-year higher education system: Ivy Tech and VU graduates who want maximum academic credit for their two-year technical degrees and are unwilling to repeat courses in pursuit of a four-year degree. Many cannot relocate to complete a baccalaureate degree at a residential campus. Often, the related technical baccalaureate degree they seek is not offered at the local public university. Collectively, large numbers of these students become discouraged by the costs in time and money that these obstacles present.

Another target audience is the younger high school graduate who is interested in a technical career. The articulated programs and ability to complete a technical baccalaureate in the local community or through the residential option will provide new avenues to a four-year degree that are accessible, affordable, and achievable.

DegreeLink Goals

The DegreeLink partnership has four major goals:

1. The establishment of program-to-program articulation agreements between all associate degree programs offered at Ivy Tech or VU that have a baccalaureate counterpart at ISU, and to provide generalist baccalaureate program opportunities for all associate degree graduates.

   Status: Nine A.S. to B.S. articulations of technical programs are completed; discussions are underway for 15 more; discussions will begin on the 12 remaining "matched" programs in Spring 1998. Four generalist baccalaureate program opportunities have been implemented.

2. The expansion of postsecondary participation in baccalaureate programs for students who cannot relocate to attend classes on a four-year college campus, by extending the four-year campus to them through distance education.

   Status: Supported by a legislative appropriation for DegreeLink, the last two years of four bachelor's programs are currently offered by ISU at two-year campuses statewide, using distance technologies.

3. The promotion of the economy of the state through the expansion of educational opportunities targeted at workforce development, so that Indiana will have a workforce attractive to the technology, manufacturing, and service industries characteristic of an expanding economy.

   Status: The last two years of Electronics Technology, Human Resource Development, Industrial Supervision, and General Industrial Technology BS programs are available at Ivy Tech and VU campuses statewide, allowing two-year graduates to complete workforce-oriented degree programs in their local communities.

4. The enrichment of the experiences of students with a diversity of learning styles, schedules, and backgrounds through an effective mix of a range of technologies that facilitate high quality student-faculty interaction and permit course work independent of time and place constraints.

   Status: Courses are currently available in the following media: two-way audio/one-way video, audiotape, web-based, and combinations of all media.

The Ivy Tech-ISU and ISU-VU partnership represents a new way of doing business in Indiana. Institutions that previously operated in parallel are now intersecting. Students with few affordable options for completing a four-year degree now have opportunities to earn a baccalaureate. Alternatives to traditional instruction are now available. Indiana needed a new approach to higher education access, to address its problems with educational attainment: better collaboration was imperative.

This historic effort will vastly improve access to higher education and degree-completion in the state of Indiana. It will provide Hoosiers of all ages with opportunities to gain a baccalaureate degree without leaving their jobs, families, and home communities. The nontraditional student in Indiana is often geographically bound and financially challenged. This innovative and distinctive program—DegreeLink—will remove those barriers and encourage students to complete their educational goals, remain in Indiana, and assist the state in improving both its educational opportunities and its economy.

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Creating Institutional Alliances: Bringing People and Programs Together

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The University of Wisconsin System is made up of 13 two-year institutions, the UW Colleges, and 13 four-year institutions, two of which offer doctoral degrees. The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM), one of the UW doctoral-granting institutions, works closely with two UW College campuses located in Southeastern Wisconsin. These institutions have formed a strategic alliance, under which baccalaureate degrees will be offered on site and through distance technologies on the two UW College campuses. This alliance is an appealing model of collaboration because it addresses the full range of collaborative issues, from curricular planning, upon which the model depends, to student services and technology support. Of particular interest are those issues that speak to the core of collaboration in higher education:

- ◇ **The blending of institutional cultures.** UWM is a large, urban, research university. The UW College campuses are small, teaching-centered institutions located in small communities. The roles of these institutions and of their faculties are perceived very differently. The secret to the success of the collaboration is finding the common ground to serve the common purpose of the alliance.
- ◇ **Identifying key common purposes.** A primary common purpose in these alliances is putting the community needs first—in this case, small communities whose prospective students are primarily nontraditional, placebound working adults who have high respect for higher education but barriers to participation.
- ◇ **The blending of administrative and faculty leadership.** Administrators charged with responsibilities for planning, budget, and assessment may approach developing collaborations with perspectives that differ from those of faculty who are responsible for curricular and teaching issues. Process and communication are key elements in the success of collaborations.
- ◇ **Overcoming fear of change and protection of "turf."** Keeping the students' needs at the forefront is a constant reminder in dealing with issues of turf, change in teaching modes, joint faculty involvement, and the utilization of distance technologies.
- ◇ **Dealing with logistical issues.** Working out the pragmatic details that can mean the difference between success and failure. All collaborators must feel secure in knowing how it will work, if the support mechanisms are in place, and how they will know it is succeeding.

Background

This strategic alliance is, in many ways, a natural progression in a history of collaboration and articulation between these institutions. It is also a recognition by the partner institutions that, while our articulation efforts have eased the transfer of students from the two-year institutions to UWM, they have not addressed the needs of placebound students whose ability to commute to UWM or other four-year UWS institutions is compromised considerably or not at all possible because of career and family responsibilities. Our goal is to provide these students with options for completion of degree programs that will, to the extent possible, serve their professional goals.

This proposal grew out of discussions between the deans of the UW Colleges, the UWM College of Letters and Science, and the UWM School of Business Administration. All agreed that the institutions should collaborate to offer a baccalaureate degree on the UW College campuses, and proceeded to evaluate needs of current and prospective students along with faculty resources to determine an appropriate curriculum to offer. Information on student interest was collected from several sources: surveys of current students at the three institutions; market research reported in the literature as well as that conducted by UW-Stevens Point, UW-Marathon, and UW-Marshfield; and programs being conducted in the area by competing institutions. All of this information indicated a high degree of prospective student interest in courses of study that promote skills and professional advancement in the business world.

The Curricular Program

In response to this demand, the UWM College of Letters and Science will offer a Bachelor of Arts degree on both the UW-Sheboygan and UW-Washington County campuses. The course of study will be the regular Letters and Science BA degree requirements with an interdisciplinary major in Organization and Administration. The courses required of the major will consist of selected Communication, Sociology, and Economics courses as well as advanced writing courses and electives. The program will also include a minor in General Business through the UWM School of Business Administration. The course work leading to the BA will satisfy entry without deficiency into all MBA programs in the state. As the program becomes established, other minors could be added from UWM's other professional schools.

The course offerings will be delivered on each of the campuses of the two UW Colleges through a cooperative effort of the UWM faculty and the faculty of the two UW Colleges. Students earning the degree must satisfy UWM's BA degree requirements, may earn up to 70 credits while registered as a UW College student, and must earn at least 50 credits (including 36 upper division credits) while registered as a UWM student. The College of Letters and Science will offer courses taught on site and the School of Business Administration will offer its courses via compressed video. UWM departments may contract with UW College faculty to teach UWM courses, and UW College may engage adjunct faculty and other teaching staff from UWM in offering the UW College courses.

The program is structured so that a student can complete the degree within three years of finishing the associate degree by enrolling in nine credits/semester and three credits in each of two summer sessions; or within four years by enrolling in six credits/semester and three credits in each of four summer sessions. Courses will be offered on week nights and on Saturdays. Students other than those enrolling in the degree program will also benefit from the availability of these UWM courses on the UW College campuses. Students pursuing other majors may be able to apply some of these courses to their studies, and thus may reduce the necessity of traveling to the Milwaukee campus. Students pursuing Business majors may enroll in the entire third year curriculum on the UW College campuses. Other students who have delayed completion of their baccalaureate degrees may find that these courses provide an excellent and academically stimulating entry point back into a degree program.

In addition to instruction, the alliance will provide academic advising to alliance students at the two UW College campuses, working in cooperation with an alliance coordinator. Together, these individuals will ensure that students enrolling in UWM courses and pursuing UWM degrees at the UW College campuses will have access to the same services, resources, and support systems available on the UWM campus. To this end, access will be provided to library, computer and other academic support resources. Electronic reflectors and other networks connecting the campuses will link students, faculty, advisors, and services. Collaborative recruitment, admission, and registration will ensure that prospective students are aware of the program and can readily access academic support systems at the UW College site.

Anticipated Impacts

We anticipate that this program will have several broad impacts. First, it will significantly strengthen ties between the faculties and staff of the partner institutions. UW College faculty will access UWM's extensive faculty development facilities and programs, such as faculty retreats on intensive writing instruction, assessment workshops, and programs offered through the Learning Technology Center. UWM faculty will benefit from the unique attention and skill UW College faculty bring to the teaching of freshmen and sophomores. Through the enhanced teaching involvement of the faculties, we also expect to see a corresponding rise in the number of joint research collaborations.

In addition, since the program is targeting students not currently enrolling in the UW System, it will produce new revenues. However, those revenues will not be realized until the program is well established. The anticipated cost of the program varies over a three-year period. Costs of instruction, faculty development, student advisors, and equipment increase over a three-year period as the number of courses taught rises. We project that tuition revenue will start to exceed program costs by the end of the third year of implementation.

Finally, beyond the faculty and long-term monetary benefits of the program, we see numerous other tangible and non-tangible benefits for the institutions and individuals involved. The availability of baccalaureate degrees and upper level course work on the UW Colleges campuses increases their attraction to prospective students. By partnering with the UW Colleges, UWM is able increasingly to realize its goal to serve adult and returning students in southeastern Wisconsin. The alliance between these institutions provides the citizens and businesses of the West Bend, Sheboygan, and surrounding communities greatly expanded educational opportunities not commonly found in those areas. In the end, it provides a cost-effective and innovative model for cooperative arrangements between universities and two-year institutions.

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Community Collaboration and Clinical Partnerships

Kathryn D. Schweer
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When nursing education moved into colleges and universities, it had a long history of being grounded in service. These traditional ties to service were mostly limited to experience for students in hospitals. As health care has changed to more services being provided in the community, nursing education programs have had to find new partners for students' clinical experiences.

Allen College, a private college in Waterloo, Iowa, has successfully made this transition. The history of the college includes seventy years as a hospital-based diploma school of nursing. Allen College was incorporated in 1989 as a subsidiary of Allen Health Systems, Inc., to provide educational programs in nursing and allied health fields. From the beginning, a commitment to meeting community needs guided Allen College's development of partnerships with a variety of community agencies.

Community service is central to the college mission of providing quality educational programs. The Philosophy of the College states, "Community service provides faculty and students with an opportunity to share knowledge and expertise with others in fulfillment of responsibility to society." The Goals of the College include two related to service: "To promote wellness among the citizens of Iowa and the surrounding area," and "To promote scholarly endeavors and service to the community by the students, faculty and administrators of the college."

Cooperative Agreements

Allen College has cooperative agreements with a state university and a private college for offering general education and specific support courses for nursing and allied health. These agreements provide more than a specification of courses that will transfer to meet Allen College requirements. Financial Aid is administered based on the total credits at Allen and one of the cooperating schools. Allen representatives collaborate to develop course schedules, and some courses are offered by the cooperating school at Allen College.

Other areas of collaboration under these agreements include admissions and recruitment, student services, library privileges, academic counseling, and new student orientation. Students may choose to live in the other college dormitories, and have access to all campus services. Faculty and administrators serve on the College Board of Trustees, College Council, and program advisory committees. These cooperative agreements provide choices to students and are mutually beneficial to the colleges involved.

Contractual Arrangements

☐ Clinical Contracts

It is not unusual for professional education programs to have contractual agreements with schools, business, and industry. Allen College is no exception, with more than 40 contracts in place. Contracts are developed when an instructor has identified an agency that will provide learning experiences that meet course objectives. Site visits to agencies for planning and scheduling are important for building the type of collaborative relationships that provide the most opportunities for students. Allen representatives have visited agencies in a ten county area, and are continuing to find new clinical experiences.

Examples of agency contracts include:

- ◇ **School districts**—health education; immunizations; screening programs (vision, hearing, scoliosis, developmental screening at Kindergarten Roundup); direct nursing care to children with special needs and others with identified health needs (Bosnian immigrants, low income, homeless children)
- ◇ **County health departments**—immunization Clinics, especially "flu shots"; tuberculosis testing; health surveys
- ◇ **Area agency on aging**—participating in Meals on Wheels program; health education programs at Senior Centers
- ◇ **Occupational health**—studies of health and safety issues

☐ Preceptor Agreements

Allen College has written agreements with more than 100 preceptors who provide the opportunity for students to explore areas of interest. Preceptor agreements are individually designed learning contracts based on course objectives and student learning needs. A preceptor agreement is negotiated when a student will be involved in developing a project or delivering care or services to clients. If a student is only observing the staff or functions in an agency, a letter of acknowledgment is sent to the agency, but a contract is not developed.

As the number of preceptors working with students grew, the need to formalize the relationships became imperative. Allen now provides individual orientation to each preceptor by the faculty member involved. A manual that describes the roles and responsibilities of the preceptor, faculty, and student is provided, along with a copy of the course objectives and the specific learning contract for the student. At the end of the term, the preceptor and the student evaluate the experience and each other's performance. An annual recognition program and reception highlight the many contributions of the preceptors.

Examples of preceptor agreements include:

- ◇ **Leadership course**—work with nurse managers or agency leaders to learn leadership skills needed, management styles, role relationships; compare leadership roles in hospitals, long-term care, home health, hospice, and other settings.
- ◇ **Community health courses**—work in a specific area of interest, such as small county public health agency, rural schools, community service organizations (Red Cross, American Cancer Society, etc.), or home health.
- ◇ **Elective courses**—several nursing elective courses provide opportunities for students and faculty to offer service to specific populations. For two of these courses, "Mission Nursing in Jamaica" (at a medical mission clinic in rural Jamaica) and "Transcultural Nursing" (at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota), faculty travel with the students and supervise their clinical practice. Other elective courses provide students opportunities to have preceptored clinical experiences in parish nursing, with culturally diverse clients in the community, or in perioperative settings.
- ◇ **Synthesis projects**—in the capstone course in our curriculum, students must integrate their clinical knowledge and their foundation in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities with a project that will benefit the agency or population selected. The project is designed by the student, preceptor, and course faculty. The project is to be conducted in a location or setting new to the student and focus on an interest or area that needs to be developed. Projects have included:
    - ○ agency brochures
    - ○ manual for adoptive parents
    - ○ "Handprints of Life" program
    - ○ fundraising for a new screening program
    - ○ developing a county senior health clinic
    - ○ follow-up study of lactation consultant program
    - ○ county needs assessment (APEX study)

- need for chest pain protocols in the ER
- comparison of academic and community based nursing centers

Partnerships

Allen College has developed a number of unique partnerships to fulfill its mission of service. Most of these are within the immediate neighborhood; all are within the city of Waterloo. A future goal is to develop partnerships with other communities in our region of the state.

- **Partners in Education.** PIE is a national program that links business/industry and community agencies with education to enhance the academic and social development of students. The first partnership was formed between Allen Memorial Hospital and Logan Middle School in 1986. The partnership process is finalized with a written contract that outlines the agreed-upon activities, roles, and responsibilities of all parties. These voluntary agreements are renewed annually. The partnership with Logan Middle School has expanded to all of Allen Health Systems. A faculty member at Allen College provides leadership for the programs conducted through PIE. Faculty, students, and staff from throughout Allen Health Systems serve as mentors, participate in honors and awards programs for the Logan students and support the school in many ways.

- **MAPLES Neighborhood Project.** A neighborhood health assessment was conducted as a class assignment in the course, Care of the Community as Client. The students identified loneliness and isolation as problems for many people in the neighborhood. Allen College called a meeting of leaders from agencies in the neighborhood–the hospital, bank, business owners in the small shopping center, the fire station, and churches to present the results of the survey and to develop strategies for helping neighbors meet and work together. Beginning with a picnic, a variety of opportunities have been provided for neighbors to meet each other. Subsequent sections of the class have repeated the assessment project in different areas of the neighborhood. A neighborhood association has been formed and has received a city charter. A neighborhood garden, farmers' market, fire safety demonstrations, and holiday parties are some of the events that have been held.

- **Jubilee Clinic.** A local church had noted the need for a free clinic to serve the uninsured and underinsured who needed health care. Leaders from the church, Allen College, physicians, and others worked with consultants to establish a clinic that is open to anyone every Saturday morning. Health screening, immunizations, and minor treatments are available from the physicians and nurses who volunteer their services. Other volunteers have converted an old house (owned by the church) to better meet the needs of the clinic by installing a ramp for handicapped clients, private examination rooms, and storage space for equipment and medicines. The clinic is managed by an Allen College faculty member; and other faculty, staff, and students serve as volunteers.

- **Ropes Course.** A new feature on the Allen College campus is a "low hurdle" challenge course in the woods. Challenges have been erected that require teamwork, trust, and ingenuity to solve. Faculty and staff have received training in the leadership skills necessary to be a facilitator for the Ropes Course. Students and community groups will have the opportunity to develop leadership, communication, and teamwork skills by overcoming the obstacles on the Ropes Course.

- **Community Builder: Creating Healthier Communities.** The Community Builder is a computer-based practice field developed by The Healthcare Forum, Breakthrough Learning, Inc. The purpose of the program is to increase the capacity of community members to develop a healthier community. The program has two parts: Part I provides a structured way for community members to create a mission statement and to identify community assets, action plans, and measures of success; Part II allows for computer-assisted time to explore different approaches to sustaining a healthy community and obtaining identified outcomes. The program is formatted like a game to practice action steps and evaluate outcomes over a 20-year period.

  Allen College is an affiliate of Iowa Health System, which was one of the sponsoring agents for supporting the development of the Community Builder project. A faculty member from Allen College participated in a facilitator training session on the Community Builder. She now teaches the Community Builder program in the Nursing Care of the Community as Client course. Students have found this to be a worthwhile experience that assists them to understand the impact of many factors on the health of a community. In addition, the program has been piloted with community groups.

Summary

Through these and other examples we have learned that the benefits of collaborative efforts far outweigh the costs of time, travel to visit agencies beyond our city, and refreshments at special events. We have established excellent learning opportunities for our students, helped students learn networking and team building skills, and provided many services to our community. These efforts have not only allowed us to fulfill our mission, but have enhanced our reputation within and support from the communities we serve.

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Collaborative Doctoral Education: Overcoming Barriers, Building Coalitions, and Achieving Results

Paula M. Short
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As legislators, state boards, and progressive institutional leaders call for increased partnerships in the development and delivery of educational programs, faculty and administrators often find themselves on unfamiliar terrain. While it is easy to promote collaboration, it is much more difficult to implement a truly collaborative program that has mutual vision, support, and commitment from all partners. The establishment of collaborative academic degree programs entails much more than joining together two or more separate degrees or cross-listing courses from several institutions. Rather, it requires new thinking, new structures, and new forms of communication among state policy makers, faculty, students, and institutional administrators. Traditional assumptions of power, ownership, and control become inappropriate.

Statewide Interest in Collaboration

From a state perspective, there are obvious benefits that can result when institutions choose to partner in the delivery of academic degree programs. Major goals of the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education include increased access to, efficiency in, and quality of academic degree programs. Each of these goals can be promoted by encouraging institutional collaboration.

Through mission review, Missouri's public colleges and universities are expected to develop distinctive missions that fit together into a balanced, cost-effective, higher education system. In addition to having differential admission standards, Missouri's public institutions vary in their degree-level authority, i.e., associate, baccalaureate, master's, and doctorate, and in their areas of excellence in academic programs. Through the use of advanced technologies, collaboration can provide an institution's students and faculty access to participation in degree programs that are beyond the scope of activities at the home institution. Opportunities for placebound students also increase without placing undue burden on any one institution for building a new degree program. Based on limited resources and increased demands for efficiency, collaboration also provides a responsible avenue for the development of new endeavors, while at the same time minimizing unnecessary duplication of effort and expense. Furthermore, collaboration targets limited institutional resources, including faculty expertise, which can, when integrated across campuses, become synergistic and result in increased overall quality of academic programs.

Several forces serve as barriers to collaborative efforts. There are few good role models of collaborative efforts that have withstood the test of time. In turn, the typical faculty member has limited experience in developing academic programs with colleagues outside the home department or participating in activities involving team behavior. While partnerships for academic program development across disciplines within a single institution are difficult to sustain, when crossing institutional boundaries the web of players, the governance decisions, and the reward structures become much more complex. While institutional or departmental aspirations often thwart cooperative efforts, oversight boards are finding ways to de-emphasize traditional competitive models that support independent growth of separate units within publicly supported higher education systems. At the same time, it is important to recognize that collaborative degree programs cannot be dictated, especially within educational systems that have rich traditions of local autonomy and faculty control of the curriculum. Even if the faculty is enthusiastic about collaboration in the

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development of truly collaborative degree programs, key administrators, including presidents, must also see value in working with colleagues from other institutions.

In looking for ways to promote collaboration, the Missouri Coordinating Board turned to its statutory authority of academic program approval for public institutions. While the old policies did not mention collaboration, the new policies emphasize that institutions should collaborate whenever possible to design programs that avoid unnecessary duplication. The new policies and procedures also identify cooperative initiatives among institutions in the delivery of higher education programs as fulfilling a statewide need. All institutions submitting program requests are required to comment on potential duplication with other programs within the state and to indicate whether the request involves a collaborative effort. In addition, all program requests are put on the CBHE's home page, and colleagues from across the state are invited to comment. In a nonthreatening way, the board is making collaboration the focus of a continuing conversation.

In several instances, the Missouri CBHE has received new program requests that would expand the level of degree-granting authority of an institution, while at the same time would duplicate programs offered by other state institutions. In other cases, several institutions have requested approval to deliver similar academic degrees to the same external site. Each situation represented excessive duplication at the expense of tax dollars. By working with institutions, facilitating discussion, identifying key questions for collaborative program development, and enticing institutions with the potential of additional resources for collaborative program delivery, the Missouri CBHE is succeeding in promoting greater collaborative efforts. The EdD in Educational Leadership program offered by the University of Missouri-Columbia in collaboration with five other institutions demonstrates that hard work and steadfast commitment can result in a cutting-edge program that is truly collaborative.

Accepting the Challenge

A group of educators at six institutions of higher education took up the challenge to partner for better access to doctoral education and the statewide preparation of educational leaders. Resources are being shared for a high-quality doctoral experience provided for professionals across the state of Missouri. Planning for the cooperative program began in the fall of 1995. Participants with the University of Missouri-Columbia include Central Missouri State University, Northwest Missouri State University, Southeast Missouri State University, Southwest Missouri State University, and the University of Missouri-Rolla.

Unique Aspects of the Program

The degree program is open to professionals from across a number of types of educational organizations: K-12 public schools, universities, community colleges, extension service, business and industry. The program design is based on principles of reflection and performance assessment, with its curriculum organized around problems of practice. Coursework is delivered over two years in sequenced themes. During the fall and winter semesters over a two-year period, students are on their home campus in campus-specific cohorts. Twice during their program, all students come to the UM-Columbia campus during the summer terms. This experience supports the development of a statewide cohort.

Challenges

The challenges in designing and delivering the Cooperative EdD program focus on four significant areas in addition to gaining UM Board and CBHE approval:

- Creating a culture of collaboration
- Addressing institutional requirements
- Establishing and meeting high standards
- Meeting the needs of educators across organizational types

☐ Challenge 1. Creating a culture of collaboration

A number of strategies were used in planning and designing the program. A combination of committees, teams, and technology served to create a culture of collaboration that pervades the whole cooperative effort. The yeoman's job of planning this program belongs to the Coordinating Committee. This 13-member committee worked for 16 months to oversee the design and implementation of the new degree program.

In addition, at their initiation, institutional deans formed a Dean's Council to serve as the governance body to formulate agreements among the cooperating institutions. Stakeholder groups provided input into the program design, with a formal design team providing the framework for the curriculum. Curriculum writing teams, or syllabi teams, created the theme, content, learner objectives, performance assessments, and learning activities for each of the theme areas.

Part of the strategy in creating new structures is to use new terminology as a tool for infusing all participants with a new approach for this initiative. For example, themes have replaced courses as labels for the students' learning experiences in a given semester. An instructional team is assigned for each theme, with a UM-Columbia faculty member designated as team leader and one faculty assigned to the team from each of the external sites. With leadership from the team leader, the six-person team works collaboratively by sharing instructional materials, planning the final draft of the syllabi, and providing each other with regular feedback in the process of theme delivery to students. During the summer term, all team faculty, as well as students in the statewide cohort, are in residence on the UM-Columbia campus. This approach to collaboration has proven to be very powerful.

Technology is infused into the program through the use of a cohort listserv, discussion between faculty and students via e-mail, computer simulations, and the use of teleconferencing. Intensive student uses of data bases, Internet resources, research tools via computers, and multimedia presentation technology are incorporated into the learning experiences of the students.

The program's admission process was also collaboratively designed and delivered. Representatives from all six campuses comprised the admissions committee. The committee reviewed applications, participated in an all day on-site admissions process, and met to make final decisions on admissions.

☐ Challenge 2. Addressing institutional requirements

To formalize the cooperative program, letters of agreement between UM-Columbia and the other collaborative members were developed and signed by the chancellors/presidents from each of the universities. A formal ceremony attended by Missouri's governor was held on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University. This ceremony and the formal written agreements symbolically demonstrate the level of commitment that characterizes this new endeavor.

To meet the needs of the students for financial aid, the financial aid office at UM-Columbia has worked collaboratively with regional institutions to provide financial aid for students even during the fall and winter semesters when they are at their home site.

In order for faculty at the regional universities to chair and serve on doctoral committees, faculty at the cooperating universities are considered for appointment as adjunct faculty at UM-Columbia and may apply for membership as doctoral faculty at UM-Columbia (a requirement for chairing doctoral committees). In addition, several of the cooperating universities had to create doctoral-level prefixes for courses.

☐ Challenge 3. Establishing and meeting high standards

High quality in collaborative program initiatives must be established in three areas: Students, Faculty, and Overall Performance Goals for the program. High standards for students are established at entry by admissions requirements and during the program by performance expectations required for program continuance. Grades, students' portfolios, and on-campus performance assessments are all considered important. Faculty standards include meeting the UM-Columbia qualifications for doctoral and adjunct faculty status. Assignment as doctoral faculty at UM-Columbia requires experience in working on doctoral committees and a current research and publishing record. Setting high performance goals for the entire program requires attention to adult learning and program design principles as well as to the establishment of specific performance principles. For example, one of the performance standards indicates a four-year timeline for graduation of all students in the first cohort.

☐ Challenge 4. Meeting the needs of educators across organizational types

A major challenge involved the dynamics of creating an advanced leadership doctorate that would be relevant to a variety of leadership positions in different types of organizations. A cohort approach was chosen for its value in promoting socialization and learning through student collaboration. Since the summer experience brings all the students together into one large statewide cohort, students learn from the diverse backgrounds of other professionals from across the state. Utilizing an integrated, thematic, problems-based curriculum allows for learning to occur across the diversity of students and organizational types represented.

Outcomes to Date

One hundred and thirty educators applied to the program; 93 were invited to an on-site assessment. Of these, 73 were admitted and 63 enrolled. The first cohort began their program on the University of Missouri-Columbia campus in summer, 1997. Of the admitted students, 70 percent have an average GRE (verbal, quantitative, analytical) of 1500 and a 3.5 GPA. To date, student performance has been outstanding, including the use of technology, analysis of case studies, use of computer-based research tools, and performance in teams. According to one student, "I now think differently about everything, especially how to confront the problems I am faced with as a leader."

With additional funding from the state, each participating institution has identified a new faculty line in support of the program. The Coordinating Committee collaboratively made decisions regarding the qualifications for these faculty positions. High quality faculty were recruited and hired as part of this program. As a group, these faculty are involved in a synergistic process as the program is refined and continues to build capacity throughout the state. Work in this program is ongoing professional development for all faculty. For example, a research seminar for faculty at each site will be conducted this winter semester to facilitate the doctoral research advising process. Faculty members on the fall instructional team communicate regularly through e-mail as a way to stimulate ideas, raise questions, and provide feedback to each other.

Lessons Learned

While the program is still in its initial phase of implementation, several lessons have been learned. These include:

- Commitment must come first
- Shared vision for program quality should drive all efforts
- Collaboration takes TIME
- Communication is critical
- Technology is critical
- Success requires a "Win-Win" strategy for all
- Flexibility should be integrated throughout
- Collaboration is a continuous learning and reflective process
- Lead institutions must exercise special sensitivity to enter institutional relationships

Conclusion

Social values are shifting in the move from an industrial age to the information/technology age. In the past, academicians have relied on reactive planning; the challenges of a new age require proactive planning. The era of unlimited growth has passed and academic leaders need to be more selective in the choice of new initiatives. Gone is an emphasis on hierarchical power with the shift to a framework that emphasizes problem-solving networks. In addition, there have been shifts from individual isolation to interdependence and from competition to cooperation. In attempting to address these shifts directly, the Statewide Cooperative EdD in Educational Leadership degree offered by the UM-Columbia in cooperation with five other universities results in direct benefits to Missouri and to its citizens.

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Developing a University/ Community College Partnership in Baccalaureate Education: Arizona State University East and Chandler-Gilbert Community College at the Williams Campus

Margaret Hogan
David E. Schwalm

The Arizona State University and the Maricopa Community Colleges have a history of cooperation that is recognized as a model across the nation. Now, Chandler-Gilbert Community College (CGCC) and ASU East (ASUE) have taken that model to the next level through their New Partnership in Baccalaureate Education at the Williams Campus—an innovative partnership that is attracting attention both locally and nationally. CGCC is one of the ten independent colleges of the Maricopa Community College District. ASUE opened in 1996 as the third campus of Arizona State University.

With the rededication of Williams Air Force Base to civilian educational purposes, the Maricopa Community Colleges and ASU both received substantial portions of the Williams facilities, including classrooms and laboratories, abundant student housing, recreational facilities, and other amenities of a small community. ASU moved its School of Agribusiness and School of Technology—programs, labs, courses, faculty, staff, and students—to the new site as charter programs for ASUE. The Maricopa Community College District designated the Williams Campus as a satellite campus of CGCC where the college would initially offer its programs in aviation and semiconductor manufacturing.

CGCC and ASUE have transformed the simple fact of co-location into the exciting reality of co-operation through the powerful New Partnership in Baccalaureate Education. The key word is "partnership." Our two institutions are working and planning together, combining their strengths to offer full baccalaureate degrees at the Williams Campus:

- ASU East offers course work for baccalaureate degree programs in agribusiness and in a range of specialties in technology and industrial management, along with a small selection of upper division supporting courses.
- CGCC provides—in addition to its occupational programs—the lower division general education and prerequisite courses for ASUE students enrolled in ASUE degree programs.

CGCC and ASUE have cooperated in selecting a solid core of CGCC general education courses—all with direct ASU equivalents—that fit neatly into programs of study for ASUE degrees. At the same time, this selection of courses meets the general education requirements for CGCC associate degrees and provides an attractive menu of courses for *any* students who would like to satisfy general education requirements (e.g., complete the Arizona General Education Curriculum—a general education block transfer) before transferring to an Arizona university.

As is characteristic of the New Partnership, however, planning has progressed rapidly from the simple selection of courses to the development of a "block" program in which integrated clusters combining first-year composition, a humanities elective, and a computer module have been scheduled to coordinate with required math and science courses as well as introductory courses in ASUE majors. Students will be able to participate in CGCC-ASUE integrated block schedules for their first four semesters.

The partnership between CGCC and ASUE has also transformed more conventional kinds of program articulation. In order to work out an efficient 2 + 2 articulation between CGCC's AA in semiconductor manufacturing and ASUE's BS in electronics engineering technology, community college and university faculty worked together to design four courses that would prepare students for immediate employment and yet would transfer into the BS degree program. As part of the 2 + 2 agreement, students from CGCC receive junior level credit for one course and senior level credit for another.

The mutual respect and understanding emerging from the partnership between ASUE and CGCC at the Williams Campus have also contributed to ASUE's willingness to find efficient ways to articulate occupational degrees, such as CGCC's Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees in Aviation, with baccalaureate degrees. In December 1997 the Arizona Board of Regents approved ASUE's proposal to offer the Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degree starting in the fall of 1998. Students who have completed an AAS at a regionally accredited institution will be awarded a block of 60 hours of credit for the *degree* and will then take an additional 60 hours at ASUE to complete the BAS. This "capstone" or "inverted" transfer degree has been done elsewhere, but ASUE's proposal is a first in Arizona and takes the block transfer concept of the Arizona General Education Curriculum a major step further.

The unusually high level of cooperation that exists in curriculum planning and scheduling extends to academic/student support services as well. CGCC and ASUE are sharing instructional space and the responsibility and costs of providing library support and student access to computers. The computer center, for example, combines hardware contributed by ASUE and CGCC, is located in an ASUE building, is supervised by ASUE's Information Technology Director, and is staffed by students and employees of both institutions. Each semester, we also jointly plan and produce a Williams Campus Schedule, which includes the course offerings of both institutions, noting community college/university course equivalencies in the course information. This document was at first largely a symbol of our partnership. But it was also a catalyst for bringing us together to coordinate our scheduling. We developed standard class times for Williams Campus courses (different from the class times at either of our "main" campuses), coordinated scheduling to avoid conflicts among required courses, devised a coordinated final exam schedule, and implemented a daily "community hour" when no classes are scheduled to allow time for lectures, presentations, entertainment, student organization meetings, and other co-curricular activities.

Although some student services such as admissions, registration, financial aid, and academic advising are provided by ASUE staff and CGCC staff separately and in two or more locations, our staffs are cross-trained, and there is very close coordination and communication among them. We are still in the process of resolving some issues raised by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) with regard to shared access to student information. We have, however, developed financial aid consortium agreements and a single registration form on which students can combine their ASUE and CGCC courses.

The partnership extends to all of the functions of the campus:

- A calendar of events and co-curricular activities is jointly developed and distributed to all students, faculty, and staff.
- CGCC is managing all of the recreation facilities, regardless of who officially "owns" them. These include a gymnasium, fitness center, and outdoor facilities–tennis courts, a track, and assorted playing fields. CGCC will also organize intramural sports.
- ASUE has coordinated the management of all the housing–both individual houses (of which there are more than 600) and residence halls–and residence life. Housing is available to both community college and university students, faculty, and staff.
- All Williams Campus students have access to a campus food service, a book store, and the new Williams Campus Union (an ASUE building that was, formerly, the Officers' Club).
- All students, faculty, and staff have access to free parking which, along with the common areas, is maintained through a shared maintenance agreement.
- Campus security is provided by security staff from both institutions working together with the City of Mesa Police and Fire Departments, both of which have stations on campus.

ASUE and CGCC together are "simulating" a traditional baccalaureate-granting institution through a rather complex partnership, the complexity of which remains largely transparent to students. A student admitted to one of the ASUE baccalaureate programs offered at the Williams Campus will be able to complete all of the requirements of her degree program on campus. She will be identified as an ASU student, even though in any given semester—especially in the first year—she may be taking all of her courses from CGCC. She will have all the privileges of an ASU student and a CGCC student. Whatever combination of ASUE and CGCC courses she is taking, she will pay no more (but possibly less) than the maximum ASU tuition for a semester; and the financial aid she receives will "feel" the same as the financial aid she would receive as a student fully enrolled at ASU Main in Tempe. She will receive her advising from the ASUE program, and the CGCC courses she is taking automatically transfer to ASUE at the end of the semester. We have developed an agreement that will allow her to use CGCC courses to satisfy the requirements for ASUE lower division Honors recognition, and combined ASUE and CGCC grade point average is used to determine dean's list status or academic probation. We have endeavored, in effect, to provide the student with a unified academic experience at a single site through the cooperation of separate institutions.

Both institutions approached this project with a desire to make the partnership work, and we had a strong historical base of articulation to build on—one of the best in the country. But, in spite of these advantages, the task has not been easy. It is remarkable how many institutional differences emerge when two different institutions attempt to function as one. It is like a middle-aged couple getting married. No one obstacle is a show-stopper, but all have to be dealt with; and the cumulative effect seems overwhelming at times. One example: our processes for building the schedule for subsequent semesters follow different calendars that are set by the different larger systems with which we are affiliated. Thus our attempts to coordinate the scheduling of CGCC and ASUE classes tend to be frantic efforts for both of us to cheat enough on our deadlines to create a small area of overlap in which to work. Another example: CGCC and ASUE use different criteria for determining whether or not a student is an Arizona resident, a decision that has substantial impact on the amount of tuition charged. Multiply this by a hundred or so. But we just keep dealing with things as they come up and keeping records of what we do (usually). We have become very adept at fooling rigid student information systems and scheduling software. And we always make sure (1) that we are doing nothing illegal, and (2) that whatever we do can withstand the "front page of the newspaper" test.

Virtually all of our faculty, staff, and students are involved—in one way or another—with extending the partnership and solving problems that impede our progress. About three times a year, we have a large meeting of the Partnership Coordinating Committee, which consists of the leadership from academic affairs, student affairs, facilities management, planning and budget, public relations, and residence life to report on achievements in these different areas, identifying successes, works in progress, and ongoing challenges. Such stock-taking allows us to enjoy our successes, to help one another move ahead, and to chart a course for the future.

We would like to claim that all of the good things that have happened at the Williams Campus were carefully planned and all of the challenges foreseen. But, in campus development as in writing, a lot of your best stuff and biggest challenges are discovered in the process. We will conclude by briefly describing one of most powerful but serendipitous outcomes and one of our enduring challenges.

In developing the New Partnership, our main focus was on integrating the functions of the community college and the university as effectively as possible to provide baccalaureate degrees. But, when we stepped back and looked at our handiwork, we discovered that we had actually made something even more interesting. Our partnership has made the Williams Campus something neither of us could have created alone: a single campus with *multiple points of entry and exit* for residential or commuter students:

- Students who have not completed high school can earn a GED through CGCC and thus gain the entry requirement for postsecondary education.
- Students who have graduated from high school but are not qualified for admission to ASU can come to the Williams Campus as community college students either to earn community college degrees or to qualify for admission to the university through success in the community college.
- Students qualified for admission to ASUE programs as first-year students can complete those programs on campus through the New Partnership.
- Students from community colleges or universities can transfer to the Williams Campus to complete their baccalaureate degrees with ASUE (this includes students who qualify for the BAS program by having earned an AAS).
- Students with baccalaureate degrees can enroll in ASUE master's programs.

- Students can exit with a GED, occasional credits, an occupational certificate, an occupational degree, a transfer degree, a bachelor's degree, or a master's degree.

Higher education must become more accessible to a broader range of students, and we have created through our partnership a true 21st century campus—a single site that can meet future educational needs of high school dropouts as well as graduate students.

The recurring challenge we face arises from our desire to maintain a partnership at the Williams Campus between two entities with overlapping but not identical strengths and missions. Our ability to provide the broad range of educational opportunities that is the unique strength of the Williams Campus depends on our ability to maintain the tension between cooperating effectively to serve students well and maintaining the separate institutional identities that have helped us to develop the strengths we bring to the enterprise. We must pull apart and pull together simultaneously and maintain institutional identity while pursuing increasing levels of cooperation and integration. While this tension finds daily expression battling logos and signage, these are minor expressions of serious issues having to do with institutional identification for students, faculty, and staff. Nevertheless, we made a conscious choice to develop a *partnership* in baccalaureate education rather than some sort of sub-contracting arrangement, with both institutions clearly visible at all times. We are convinced that this is the right way to do it, but we also recognize that maintaining identity in partnership may be our greatest challenge.

The ongoing challenges of sustaining our partnership at the Williams Campus are outweighed by the value, efficiency, and good sense of what we are doing. In the end, CGCC and ASUE have combined their academic strengths to offer complete baccalaureate degree programs at a single location—all at a significant savings to students and to Arizona taxpayers. More than that, we have created a new kind of campus serving the educational needs of a broad array of students by providing multiple points of entry and exit at a single site. The remarkable thing is how much we have accomplished already, although we are only in our second year of operation at the Williams Campus. The "New Partnership in Baccalaureate Education" has motivated us to take university/community college cooperation to the next level and to provide students with a new and exciting choice in higher education in Arizona.

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The Southeast Missouri Educational Consortium and Articulation Project

Charles E. Kupchella
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Introduction

In 1994, Southeast Missouri State University started a program-to-program articulation project with ten area community colleges. The result now serves as a model for 2+2 transfer in Missouri. The project led to the printing of ten Transfer Handbooks that include eight semester transfer curriculum guides. The guides provide recommended course sequences for two years at each of ten community colleges and two years at Southeast for all majors on campus. These handbooks also contain all other transfer information needed simply to transfer. The success of the handbooks has been measured by a more than 30% increase in the number of transfer students from these ten community colleges over the last two years.

The success of the articulation project became the foundation for a more comprehensive connection, the Southeast Missouri Educational Consortium, formed in 1996. This consortium also serves as a model for sharing resources among different types of educational institutions to meet educational needs. The consortium includes three universities, two community colleges, and ten technical schools. The focus of the consortium is to plan cooperatively the development and delivery of educational programs and services to maximize resources and reduce duplication. The consortium has been involved in the development of new cooperative graduate and undergraduate degrees, establishment of shared off-campus sites, and strategic planning for the development of a telecommunications-based delivery system.

An All-the-Way Articulation Project

Southeast Missouri State University is a regional university with a commitment to meeting the postsecondary educational needs of the southeast corner of Missouri. This commitment includes working cooperatively with community colleges in the region to ensure the smooth transfer of students and credit hours between institutions. When the Missouri Legislature decreed that students completing an Associate of Arts degree from public community colleges in the State of Missouri will have met the lower division general education requirements at a four year public institution, Southeast developed general education articulation agreements with area community colleges.

During recent years national and local data have shown that more and more students are deciding to take more of their higher education at community colleges for a number of reasons, principally cost and convenience. Recognizing this trend, Southeast established a Transfer Admissions Office in 1991. Meanwhile, several academic departments on campus developed "program-to-program" articulation agreements for some of their majors. From these efforts and input from area community college personnel, it was decided in Spring 1994 to develop a transfer handbook for each of ten area community colleges (one of which is the three-campus St. Louis Community College System) with the purpose of making Southeast the "transfer institution of choice" by faculty, advisors, and students at these institutions. The handbook development efforts were to result in: (1) program-to-program articulation with eight semester (some required nine and ten semesters) guides for all Southeast majors, (2) Southeast faculty having "people-to-people" interaction with the academic departments from each of the twelve campuses, and (3) determination of "must know" transfer information to make the transfer handbook a "one-stop" type of document.

☐ Project strategy

The first and undoubtedly most important step in the project was the endorsement of the idea by an overwhelming majority of the department chairpersons at a summer retreat in 1994. The chairpersons recognized from the outset that the project would be long-term and that the agreements would serve only as a first step toward establishing people-to-people connections. The chairpersons and the faculty proved to be keys to getting the job done.

To facilitate the project, a special Assistant to the Provost for Community College Relations was appointed to work with the Registrar and the Assistant Director of Admissions. The Assistant to the Provost was the major contact person with the community college administrators and Southeast departments to coordinate the effort. The Registrar worked with the Southeast department chairs to ensure that agreements negotiated met university and state transfer policies. The Assistant Director of Admissions was the key contact with the community college advisors for development of the "one-stop" handbook information and development of procedures for the distribution and use of the handbooks. Each community college was visited by the Assistant Provost for Community College Relations for meetings with appropriate vice presidents, dean, chairs, registrars, and advisors to discuss advantages, get "buy-in," and assure them that Southeast was genuinely interested in a partnership approach.

The next important task was to provide chairs and faculty on the Southeast campus with the necessary information to complete the program-to-program articulation agreements. This was important because a goal of the process was to develop positive long-term professional relationships among the faculty of the institutions involved. A series of workshops was given for Southeast chairs and faculty who agreed to complete the project for each department. The workshop participants were provided: (1) a catalog for each community college, (2) a check sheet showing all Southeast majors and comparable programs at each community college, (3) a listing of existing general education course equivalencies for each community college, (4) printouts of all existing approved Southeast major course equivalencies for each community college, (5) sample four-semester general education guides for each community college, (6) names and phone numbers for community college chairpersons and dean, and (7) an electronic copy of the standard eight-semester guide format to be used.

Southeast personnel were asked to follow a standard procedure for completing the process. It was recommended that they visit with each of their community college counterparts to identify all major courses that could be transferable toward the major. They were then to work with their counterparts to develop a four-semester associate degree guide that included a recommended sequence of the 62 - 70+ hours required for the associate degree. When this was completed, the Southeast representatives developed guides for the four semesters (a few majors require five or six) to be taken at Southeast to complete the baccalaureate degree. The Registrar was asked to review the guides to ensure that all degree program and transfer requirements were met. After Registrar approval, the guides were forwarded to the community college counterpart for final review and approval.

Other Southeast information presented in each handbook to accomplish the "one-stop" concept included: (1) application for admission, (2) admission requirements, (3) a transfer procedure checklist, (4) availability of student services, (5) financial aid information and scholarship forms, (6) telephone registration procedures, (7) campus map, and (8) important names and telephone numbers. Permission was also obtained to utilize individual community college logos on each guide to promote the partnership concept.

Based on the size of the community college, appropriate numbers of the handbooks were printed for distribution at each of the twelve campuses. A special event was staged at each of the institutions on the day the guidebooks were delivered and distributed. After spending the day visiting with faculty and students, Southeast personnel left additional copies for each faculty member. Multiple copies were provided to advisors for use by students for planning their associate degrees before transferring to Southeast. Adequate numbers were retained on campus for Southeast admissions counselors to distribute at college days and to area high school counselors.

Southeast has now completed a second printing of the handbooks and plans to update and reprint them on a biannual basis. The updating process includes encouraging Southeast department chairs to continue professional networking and interaction with their community college counterparts so that curriculum changes can be more easily integrated into the articulation agreements. Each community college Registrar or Director of Advising is asked to communicate curriculum changes to Southeast in May of each year. The Assistant Director of Admissions works with appropriate department chairs and the Registrar to make necessary changes in the transfer guides in preparation for the next printing. Planning is also underway to make all of the handbook information and transfer guides available on the University's home page.

☐ **Project results**

A recently completed follow-up survey by Southeast's Harrison College of Business of community college faculty, advisors, and students found that the articulation agreements have enhanced academic relations and advisement of students, opened up communications lines, and affected student decisions to transfer to Southeast, as well as having greatly reduced the uncertainty about which courses transfer. Direct and expected benefits from the effort included: (1) More than a 30% increase in the number of transfers from the ten institutions between 1995 and 1997 (most of these students come to the Southeast campus for advisement with a copy of the transfer handbook that guided their community college studies), (2) expected improvement of University retention to graduation rates, (3) new relationships between faculty at the institutions have resulted in many examples of professional interaction and coordinated curriculum development, (4) some community college faculty are recommending students to Southeast because of the relationships they have developed with Southeast departmental counterparts, and (5) several new cooperative 2+2 bachelor's degree programs have been developed for delivery to individual community college campuses.

Southeast's efforts have been recognized as the standard for program-to-program articulation in Missouri. Kala Stroup, Commissioner of Higher Education, stated: "We appreciate the efforts and leadership provided by the Southeast faculty and administrative staff in developing guidebooks for the seamless transition between two-year and four-year programs. In Missouri this articulation effort has assured countless students that their programs of study and their career goals can be achieved in a timely fashion. Policy makers appreciate and recognize that such efforts reduce costly duplication and promote two-year/four-year institution partnerships."

Southeast Missouri Educational Consortium

While the articulation project was underway, Southeast Missouri State University began a long-range strategic planning process. The Board of Regents and the administration held hearings in nine cities as part of this process. As a result of discussions on and off campus, the University established six priorities, one of which was to serve the region more effectively in various ways including giving greater access to higher education. The University realized that this task would be a large one and that it could not undertake the task alone.

The nature of the Southeast region is such that the need for two-year, certificate, and other technical programs is very great, and Southeast had only a limited array of such programs. The University recognized that it would need to work with the community colleges that serve portions of our service region. Southeast's service region is large, consisting of twenty-five counties and comprising an area larger than nine of the fifty states, with a low educational attainment. Southeast Missouri's college-going rate is about two-thirds of the state average for Missouri.

Fortunately, the University's strategic plan dove-tailed nicely with a statewide blueprint for education that *also* emphasized increased access and cooperation between and among the state's many fine, public, higher education institutions. Also, fortuitously, for the past decade the University had in place a model of an inter-institutional cooperative venture in the form of the Harry Crisp Bootheel Education Center (BEC) located in Malden, Missouri. This facility, which today serves five to six hundred students, is operated by Southeast Missouri State University in cooperation with Three Rivers Community College, Poplar Bluff, Missouri, and with the University of Missouri Extension. Essentially, Southeast Missouri State University operates the facility, much of the coursework is delivered by community college faculty, and some upper division and graduate programming is provided by Southeast Missouri State University and the University of Missouri Extension. Also, fortuitously, Southeast Missouri State had carved out for itself a role in the state's plan for enhancing technical education at all levels; thus, the door was open for interaction between Southeast and its community college partners in the technical realm. In addition, the advent of opportunities to deliver education through telecommunications meant new opportunities for enhancing both cooperation and access to higher education.

At the outset, there were many other elements of cooperation between and among higher education institutions in southeast Missouri in place in addition to the BEC. Some examples include:

- A Southeast Missouri Tech/Prep Consortium, which has postsecondary institutions working with ten area vocational technical schools and 63 high schools.

- The Perry County Higher Education Center (thirty miles north of Southeast Missouri State), which had been launched a year earlier by Mineral Area Community College and Southeast. This is modeled after the BEC but with more of a *joint* operating format in cooperation with the Perry County Public Schools.

- ○ An extended campus program in Sikeston, Missouri, thirty miles south of Southeast, where Three Rivers and Southeast Missouri State jointly offer courses leading to associate degree programs that can be completed on the Three Rivers campus.
- ○ A University of Missouri Extension, Southeast Missouri State University, and Mineral Area College cooperative to provide small-business development services to the Southeast Missouri region.
- ○ A recently established Southeast Missouri Regional Professional Development Center providing opportunities for continuing education for teachers. This is in cooperation with regional schools and the University.
- ○ Most recently, the offering of a Doctorate in Educational Leadership by the University of Missouri at several master's level institutions throughout Missouri, including Southeast Missouri State University.

In conjunction with the inauguration of a new President at Southeast Missouri State University, a consortium signing ceremony was hosted on the Southeast campus in April of 1997. In attendance was the leadership of the University of Missouri System, Southeast Missouri State University, Three Rivers Community College, and Mineral Area College. Also signing the original consortium agreement was the Commissioner of Missouri's Coordinating Board of Higher Education; and present, to give his support, was the Governor of Missouri. Subsequently, because of its involvement in Southeast Missouri, an 1890 land-grant institution with a statewide mission, Lincoln University, joined the Southeast Missouri Consortium shortly after naming its new president.

☐ Tenets of the consortium agreement

The principles under which the consortium was founded consist of fundamental *principles* such as a need to share and maximize resources while guaranteeing institutional autonomy. The agreement recognizes that each of the institutions involved has a specific, unique mission, and that these must be respected. It was agreed that all of the partners would be notified concerning any intention to take courses and/or programs anywhere within the southeast Missouri region. The consortium members agreed to work together to identify and respond to needs in Southeast Missouri; and there was a tactical agreement that Three Rivers Community College would play the primary leadership role in serving areas south of Cape Girardeau, while Mineral Area College, located in Park Hills, and Southeast Missouri State University would play primary roles in service areas north of Cape Girardeau. In the Cape area itself, which is *not* served by a community college, Three Rivers agreed to cooperate with Southeast Missouri State University to offer remedial and selected general education courses, while Mineral Area College has agreed to cooperate with Southeast in providing selected postsecondary vocational/technical programs in Cape Girardeau. It was agreed that customized training in the region would utilize the resources of the area's vocational schools, community colleges, and the four-year degree institutions in the consortium–principally, Southeast Missouri State University. The consortium members also agreed to work together to develop a telecommunications-based delivery system for the region that would serve as a component of the *statewide* telecommunications-based delivery system to be established as part of the statewide blueprint for higher education.

☐ Purposes of the consortium

The purposes established for the Southeast Missouri Educational Consortium are to support economic development, to improve the quality of life for the people of southeast Missouri, and to coordinate the delivery of accessible, affordable education programs. Current members of the consortium are: Southeast Missouri State University, Three Rivers Community College, Mineral Area College, University of Missouri System Administration, and Lincoln University.

Coordination and leadership of the consortium rest with the presidents of the institutions. The headquarters of the consortium was designated as Southeast Missouri State University, where the files of the consortium will be kept in the Office of the President. It was agreed that the president of Southeast Missouri State University would provide staff coordination for the consortium and secretarial support for the consortium. It was further agreed that members of the consortium would meet on a semi-annual basis, additionally as needed, to review the needs for postsecondary programs throughout the region, and to consider ways in which these may be met cooperatively.

On October 14, 1997, a meeting of the consortium was held at Southeast Missouri State University. Fifteen members of the Missouri General Assembly, representatives of the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education, officials of the Coordinating Board staff, and others met to hear about the status of the consortium and plans for its future.

Current projects of the consortium include:

- ○ Further development of the extended campus of the Sikeston Area Higher Education Center where the legislature recently provided funding for a new building in the Sikeston Industrial Park.
- ○ As part of Southeast Missouri State University's comprehensive mission enhancement plan, consideration given over the next few years with consortium partners for locating new additional extended campus sites in the southeast Missouri region.
- ○ Building a telecommunications-based delivery system.
- ○ A 2+2 program in Industrial Technology in St. Louis involving the University of Missouri, Southeast Missouri State University, and the St. Louis Community College System.
- ○ A cooperative master's degree in Engineering Management involving University of Missouri-Rolla and Southeast Missouri State University.

Although there have been many cooperative accomplishments to date, the consortium members continue to learn to work together in a complex environment involving separate boards, differential missions, and the many logistical hurdles that characterize such cooperative ventures. Nonetheless, the consortium has moved ahead with the spirit that "we will try things and if they don't work, we'll change them and try again." A particularly notable experiment involving Three Rivers Community College is a new "PREP Program," whereby students who are unable to meet the admission standards for Southeast Missouri State University, but are at the threshold, will be given an opportunity to complete a year of college as Three Rivers Community College students on the Southeast campus. Twenty-plus students are currently enrolled in this pilot program. Task-groups are being established to address the issues of telecommunications-based delivery system compatibility and needs-assessment/curriculum-planning.

Summary

The wave of the future will surely mean more inter-institutional cooperation. Technology provides a means to cooperate in ways that heretofore were not possible, or at the very least, much more difficult. So far, inter-institutional cooperation in southeast Missouri in the form of articulation projects with ten community colleges and the Southeast Missouri Educational Consortium have proven to be effective and well worth the effort to launch these initiatives. The future promises efforts that are even more substantial and more effective.

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One State's Response to the Collaborative Imperative: Voluntary Articulation Between the University of Wyoming and Wyoming's Community Colleges

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Introduction

For a decade, the higher education institutions in the State of Wyoming have voluntarily developed a set of model statewide articulation agreements, which have resulted in a system of common name and numbering of lower division courses, dual admission agreements, 2+2, 2+3, and 3+1 articulation agreements, joint delivery of degree programs, and shared data on student performance. The agreements are voluntary, and can serve as a model for how a University and seven autonomous community colleges can develop and cooperate in maintaining an articulation system that serves the needs of students who transfer from community colleges to the University, and from one community college to another.

Presenters are aware that the Wyoming model may not be directly transferable to complicated, multi-level educational systems, governed by any number of governing boards. However, the Wyoming model, which involves eight institutions, could serve as a model for voluntary cooperation between a university and any number of community colleges in a district or a geographic area, or for voluntary cooperation between governing boards.

The remainder of this paper will describe the various types of articulation agreements and how each type of agreement is maintained. Actual copies of the agreements are available from the authors.

☐ Wyoming Higher Education Transfer Guide

The statewide Higher Education Transfer Guide includes more than 400 common named and numbered courses, and more than 3,000 lower division courses that transfer from community colleges to the University of Wyoming. Maintenance of the Transfer Guide is governed by a Manual of Procedures agreed upon by the University's associate provost and the community college deans. Basically, the Manual of Procedures sets guidelines for how courses for transfer are submitted to the University and approved by University departments, and how the common named and numbered courses are determined. The University has one transfer coordinator (the administrative assistant to the associate provost) and each community college has a transfer coordinator (administrative assistants to the deans or associate deans). The Transfer Guide is maintained jointly by these academic coordinators. The University of Wyoming transfer coordinator is responsible for maintenance of the Guide on-line, and one hard copy of the guide is published annually and distributed broadly statewide. The draft of the guide is reviewed and proofread annually by the community college coordinators before publication.

There is also a system for coordination of vocational-technical courses, which is maintained voluntarily by the community colleges. One of the transfer coordinators (located at Casper College) works in a similar way with the community college coordinators to maintain the statewide vocational-technical transfer guide.

In order to appropriately assign course numbers to the various academic transfer and vocational-technical courses, there is an agreed-upon numbering scheme for all academic and vocational-technical courses. In order to maintain the integrity of the system, all colleges request course numbers to be assigned for academic transfer courses from the University's transfer coordinator and for vocational-technical courses from the community college transfer coordinator. The two coordinators jointly maintain the statewide numbering system for courses.

☐ Common-named and numbered courses

The 400+ common named and numbered courses statewide are primarily the general education or "University Studies" courses, which are lower-division courses used by all colleges and the University to meet general education requirements. Although all institutions set their own general education requirements, there is enough consensus covering "core" courses to make this system work for the students. Common named and numbered courses may also be lower-division prerequisites in professional areas such as Business or Education. These common named and numbered courses may not be exact duplicates in course syllabi, texts, etc., but the courses *do* share common expected outcomes. The courses are maintained and updated through a series of annual "articulation meetings" among the relevant faculty. Over the decade, faculty at the University and the community colleges have overcome their initial resistance to sharing common names and numbers of lower division courses, because they have come to appreciate the value of this type of real "articulation" in learning outcomes for the students, and in the "seamless" transfer that it allows students.

Any changes in titles or numbers of these "equivalent" courses must be articulated statewide before the changes can take effect. The above-referenced Manual of Procedures spells out procedures that must be followed before any institution may make changes to an "Equivalent" course in the system.

Changes to the "Equivalent" courses can precipitate spirited and sometimes heated dialogue among faculty, but faculty participation is the key to success in maintaining integrity of the statewide "core" or general education system for the students. The annual articulation meetings promote good communication and good will among the faculties. Cost of participation in the annual faculty articulation meetings is borne by each institution. Some of the faculties choose to meet each year in a central location, while others have developed a tradition of "moving the meetings around" so that they can become familiar with each other's campuses.

A recent study of the effectiveness of the Wyoming Course Transfer Guide and articulation system revealed that the system is 97% effective for students transferring from community colleges to the University of Wyoming. The 3% of courses that did not transfer could be accounted for by remedial mathematics courses and some vocational-technical courses that transfer students chose to take at the community colleges. Between 700-800 students transfer each year from the Wyoming community colleges to the University of Wyoming.

☐ Dual admission agreements

Although the Wyoming Higher Education Transfer Guide is effective in facilitating "seamless" transfer for most students in the Wyoming higher education system, a system of "Dual Admission Agreements" between the University and four of the community colleges gives students additional advising support and assurance that all of the courses that they take at the community college will transfer to the University of Wyoming. Under the Dual Admission Agreements, students who are eligible to meet the University's admission standards and who declare intention to transfer to the University may be "dually admitted" to the community college and the University at the time the student enters the community college. After the community college student completes the Dual Admission application, the designated coordinator submits the student's application fee to the University of Wyoming Office of Admissions. The Admissions Office then notifies the receiving department at the University. The student is assigned a University advisor, who is then available to consult with the student and the student's community college advisor concerning the student's schedule and academic progress.

Advantages of this program are that students and parents feel much more secure in the knowledge that the courses taken will transfer and will count toward meeting the student's degree requirements at the University. Each semester, the community college sends the student's transcript to the University's Office of Admissions, which places the record in the student's file and transmits it to the student's University advisor. By the time the student transfers to the University of Wyoming, after one or two years, the student and University advisor have already developed a supportive relationship. The program also alerts University departments to community college students who may be excellent candidates for scholarships or other university programs upon transfer.

☐ Cooperative agreements

The University and the Wyoming community colleges jointly deliver 10 statewide degree programs, and a number of other degree programs through a series of Cooperative Agreements. In Casper, a University Center (UW/CC) delivers 15 degree programs in cooperation with Casper College. Under the Cooperative Agreements, the community college delivers the lower-division courses and the University delivers the upper-division courses for the degrees. The upper-division courses are delivered through on-site, web-based, audio-teleconference, compressed video, or a combination of these delivery methods. The Cooperative Agreements also define the University and the community colleges' agreements with regard to the provision of classroom space, library services, and student services. These degree programs are delivered at the community college sites. At all but one location, the University's academic coordinator's office and the distance delivery classrooms are located on the community college campuses. Approximately one new degree program has been offered each year throughout the past decade. Students' "joint enrollments" qualify for financial aid eligibility. The Cooperative Agreement degree programs currently serve approximately 3000 students each semester. Many students now graduate from the University of Wyoming without ever having taken courses on the "main campus."

☐ Examples of 3+2 and 3+1 agreements

While most students can be served well by the concept of 2+2 agreements, with the first two years of lower-division courses offered by the community college and the second two years by the University, this is not practicable or possible in all disciplines. Accordingly, the University and various community colleges have developed some additional "nontraditional" agreements to serve students in specific disciplinary areas.

The current 3+2 agreements apply to Engineering. Although the community colleges offer a substantial preparation in general education and in pre-engineering mathematics and science, they cannot offer enough engineering courses at the lower-division level. The University and several of the colleges have developed 3+2 agreements whereby students spend the first three years at the community college and the final two years at the University. During the three years at the community college, students are able to take the prerequisite Engineering courses for the upper-division Engineering requirements.

The University of Wyoming has no faculty with expertise in Dental Hygiene. However, there is a need for dental hygienists to have an opportunity to obtain a bachelor's degree in Dental Hygiene. Under the University's agreement with Sheridan College, the first three years of the Dental Hygiene program are delivered by Sheridan College. The final year of the degree, which includes additional "University Studies" requirements and professional health administration courses, is delivered by the University of Wyoming, which grants the Bachelor's degree in Dental Hygiene. Since the University has no dental hygiene faculty, the program is administered by the University's coordinator of the outreach degree program in Nursing and the director of the dental hygiene curriculum at Sheridan College.

Additional information on these articulation agreements and degree programs between the University of Wyoming and the Wyoming community colleges can be obtained from the authors of this paper.

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Recommendations for the Model AAS Degree and Implications for NCA Accreditation

Marguerite E. Boyd
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For the last decade, many community colleges across the nation have followed the Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree model developed by the National Council for Occupational Education (NCOE), adopted in July 1985. NCOE's model resulted from a national Task Force that developed a policy statement on "Criteria for Excellence in Associate in Applied Science Degree Programs." This statement identified 14 criteria for excellence for the AAS degree, addressing:

- specialty designation
- employment needs
- outcome orientation
- total credit hours
- technical specialty
- general education and related studies
- admission requirements
- student services
- multiple exit/reentry
- experience-based credit
- secondary school articulation
- baccalaureate articulation
- institutional networking

In 1986 the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) modified its policy on the AAS degree to align with the NCOE model. By revisiting the AAS model today, Illinois' community colleges can determine if developments of the past decade and new directions charged for the future of occupational education warrant change. To meet this goal, the Illinois Council for Occupational Education (ICOE) and the ICCB jointly convened the AAS Model Task Force whose specific charge is to revisit the NCOE criteria for excellence and determine if revisions or additions are needed.

A participatory process was used to involve the community college system broadly to identify new criteria for a model AAS degree. The Task Force originally anticipated completing Illinois' model by late 1997 and publishing it in a brief document similar to NCOE's current 11-page AAS model. Illinois community colleges would then use the model as the standard for developing new AAS degrees and updating existing degrees.

In July 1997, however, NCOE acted to establish a new national task force for the AAS degree, launched at its October 1997 conference. Illinois has subsequently changed its game plan and will issue its model as a preliminary model for pilot test rather than as a final model, awaiting the outcomes of the NCOE's task force to complete the state model.

Illinois Project

A preliminary AAS model is currently being drafted for Illinois community colleges to pilot test, while the NCOE model is under development. Illinois will then use the results of the pilot testing as well as the final NCOE model, and may be able to adopt the NCOE model outright. We expect that the pilot testing will help fine tune the model, but also will help identify additional territory that needs to be traveled. For example:

- Have we adequately captured additional criteria for excellence that need to be woven into the model by adding or strengthening criteria, e.g., for collaborative curriculum development, faculty qualifications and professional development, student information, innovative structuring and scheduling, occupational skills standards, work-based learning, articulation and career ladders, integration of academic and technical instruction, telecommunications, credit for prior learning, post-AAS degree certificates, and accountability?
- Have we been forward-thinking enough to build a new paradigm for AAS degrees that will make them more effective? Or, have we failed to forecast some critical changes on the horizon or to take bold enough steps for AAS degrees to keep pace with–and set the pace of–needed improvements in occupational education and workforce development? Have we adequately set the stage for further deliberation and enhancements to the AAS degree that perhaps cannot be resolved today but need to be tackled in the future?
- How will new provisions in the model combine with or have an impact on paradigms and policies of other entities that influence education, such as regional accrediting bodies? What is an appropriate and effective way to address this?
- Have we adequately demonstrated that, not only does the "recipe" of components for AAS degrees benefit from upgraded ingredients, but that the entire process of building and delivering the degree needs to be restructured to be fully collaborative among secondary and postsecondary education at the private sector–that while the model and its ingredients will naturally become dated with time, it is the underlying collaborative process paired with a commitment to continuous improvement that keep the degree alive and effective?

NCOE Project

The NCOE AAS Task Force was launched at the October 1997 annual conference in San Antonio. It will be conducted in several phases that will involve

- determining underlying principles and assumptions upon which the effort is to be based and brainstorming a thorough list of issues and factors to consider,
- systematically engaging in discussion of the issues to reach agreement on corresponding criteria for excellence, and
- finalizing a national model.

The first phase is now underway, utilizing discussion from the NCOE conference and input through the NCOE listserv and web site. Issues posted in Illinois as well as all states across the nation will be factored in. Therefore, we anticipate that issues such as those noted above may be pertinent to the national model and states throughout the nation. It also is critical to engage in discussion beyond the two-year institutions that deliver AAS degrees, including the private sector, four-year colleges and universities, and accrediting associations, as the model is developed.

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Chapter 5

NCA

Case Studies in Collaboration: International Education

THE Collaborative Imperative

103rd Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
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The Global Alliance for Transnational Education: A New Global Organization Emerges

Marjorie Peace Lenn

The global marketplace and new technology are contributing to the rapid globalization of higher education. Today's business environment draws its professional work force from all corners of the globe. Human resource development divisions of multinational corporations face the increasing challenge of evaluating courses and degrees from other countries when identifying personnel. Further, higher education is no longer provided solely within national borders. Available through both the higher education and corporate sectors, transnational education can be found in multiple forms, including both electronic and traditional on-site instruction and training programs. Specific examples can include: **branch campuses** (campuses established in another country to provide educational programs to overseas students); **franchises** (a US institution approves an overseas entity to provide one or more of its programs); **study abroad/articulation** (the systematic recognition by a US institution of specified study at an overseas institution carrying partial credit towards a degree at the US institution); **twinning** (agreements between institutions in different countries to offer joint programs); **corporate programs** (corporate training and development courses carrying academic credit); **distance education** (credit-bearing distance education programs delivered across borders through satellites, computers, correspondence, delayed / live broadcast, or other technological means).

Issues of quality, purpose, and responsibility abound in this new borderless educational arena. The time is ripe for a new international alliance of business, higher education, and government dedicated to principled advocacy for transnational educational programs. This new alliance is GATE–the Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE Brochure 1996).

It is the purpose of this paper is to provide a brief global context for the new organization and discuss its organization and services as envisioned by its founders.

The Global Context

Institutions globally are seeking new frontiers for growth and recognition. A part of their motivation is spurred by a need for additional resources as developed countries become less capable of subsidizing higher education. But the loftier among motivations lies in the rapid globalization of the marketplace and the needs envisioned by the higher education community to prepare a new generation for this inevitability.

Economic growth is at the heart of this change. For 1992, the United Nations Economic, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimated the "world market" for international students as slightly in excess of 1.2 million (*UNESCO Statistical Yearbook*, 1992). However, this world market is measured by the number of students enrolled in educational institutions outside their country of origin as counted by receiving countries. This figure, therefore, does not take into account the unknown but perhaps even larger number of students who are receiving their education in their own country but from international sources. Whereas the United States, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Canada *import* the largest number of international students (63 percent in 1990–UNESCO), the United States, Britain, and Australia are touted to be the primary *exporters* of higher education. The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative reports that since 1992, education has ranked fifth in U.S. cross border sale of services. In 1994, the United States earned about $7 billion (US) for educational services (Ascher, *New Trade Agreements: Implications for Education and the Professions*, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, 1996) while Australia earned about $1 billion (US) in the year prior (Department of Employment, Education and Training, Australia, 1993), and is estimated to have reached $3 billion (US) in 1997.

These figures not only do not count the number of students who are receiving a "foreign" education in their own countries, but they also do not include corporate education. As business globalizes, the multinationals are finding it necessary to conduct their own educational programs for their personnel. There are a number of reasons why the corporations believe that this is necessary, such as low quality higher education in certain countries where their enterprises are located, or the lack of educational facilities or expertise in highly technical areas. In some cases, the provision for an educational program is contracted out to higher education institutions in countries other than where the enterprise is located (e.g., the National Technological University, a distance education consortium of U.S. institutions for graduate level degree programs in engineering). But in a growing number of cases, the human resource divisions of corporations are providing their own (e.g., Ericsson Telecom, United Technologies, Motorola, and others).

The increasing export market in higher education and new corporate educational programs, accelerated by the new technologies that make distance education a primary medium, are but indicative of a larger activity: regional and global economic growth and the subsequent increased academic and professional mobility. Indeed, the multiple accreditation phenomenon already taking place in Europe and North America may barely become normal activity before it is replaced by regional and eventually global accreditation, motivated by the trade agreements. These forms of quality assurance may provide a system of standards and evaluation applied commonly among institutions and their educational programs on a regional or global basis. Although the question, "What is a quality institution of higher education?" is at the heart of regional activity in the developing world, it is the globalization of the professions and the need to provide common professional preparation that are the fastest moving pretenses for regional and global standards setting and accreditation.

There are recent global initiatives that also recognize the rapid internationalization of higher education and the need to assess its effectiveness. In the professions, an example of international accreditation is the recent agreement among the engineering accreditation bodies of Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, United Kingdom, and the United States. Known as the "Washington Accord" and implemented in 1991, the accrediting bodies agreed to recognize the substantial equivalence or comparability of their respective processes for accrediting engineering programs. The accrediting bodies can make recommendations to licensing authorities in their home countries that engineering programs in the other member countries be treated as equivalent (Ascher, *Ibid.*, 1996). The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) has begun to affect business as usual by encouraging the development of common educational standards, mutual recognition, and the liberalization of the processes by which professionals are allowed to practice. In 1997 the Working Party on Accountancy of the WTO produced standards that will serve to define and advance the profession internationally. Traditional nationalistic modes of quality assurance, including institutional and programmatic, will inevitably work in conjunction with and/or give way to global forms of public protection and educational quality, beginning with professional education. Countries that have not established their educational systems based on rigorous standards of literally "world class" quality further risk the replacement of their professional labor force by those who have anticipated global mobility and have fine-tuned their quality assurance systems accordingly.

The Global Alliance for Transnational Education: Formation, Organization, and Services

GATE was envisioned by the corporate sector and founded in 1995 by Jones International, Ltd., a multinational telecommunications corporation. Jones has since been joined by a number of multinational corporations including Coca-Cola, IBM, Ericsson Telecom, Lockheed Martin, Oracle, Follett, Lucent Technologies, Kodak, KPMG, and others. The first invitational forum of GATE was held in October 1995, co-hosted by the Center for Quality Assurance in International Education and Jones International, Ltd. GATE's founding affiliates are individuals drawn from:

- **National quality assurance bodies**—Committee of University Principals, Republic of South Africa; Commission d'evaluation de l'enseignement collegial, Canada; Chilean Accreditation Council; Secretaria de Educacion Publica, Mexico; National Council for Education Awards, Ireland; Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council, People's Republic of China; and the New Zealand Academic Audit Unit.

- **National higher education associations**—Hungarian Rectors' Conference; American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers; The Laurasian Institution (Asia and U.S.); the Australian Education Office; and the American Council on Education.

- **Institutions with major off-shore offerings**—Open University (United Kingdom) and Monash University (Australia).

- **International organizations**—The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education; and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The founding affiliates identified three primary needs at the heart of establishing a new organization:

1. **The need for a reliable and current data base of transnational educational programs globally**

   A major service of GATE is a global data base. Listings of "accredited" institutions of higher education and their programs are generally available in print and electronic media and are readily used by human resource divisions of corporations, qualifications authorities, admissions offices of educational institutions, and prospective students (among others). These publications generally list institutions that operate within national borders but do not usually list: (a) the transnational educational programs of these institutions in other countries; (b) the degree programs produced by the private/corporate sector; or (c) the growing number of distance education programs that are "beamed" across borders to foreign national student bodies. With a project timeline for completion in December 1998 the GATE Data Base will provide World Wide Web based access to tertiary-level transnational education and training programs and courses as well as the validation procedures they undergo by recognition authorities in the exporting and importing countries.

2. **The need to develop cooperatively principles of good practice and a global quality assurance process**

   Key to GATE's purposes are Principles of Good Practice in the provision of transnational programs. The Principles assist institutions and organizations in the development and evaluation of quality education that crosses national borders. They can be adopted by national systems for application to transnational programs provided by their institutions of higher education, and/or they are applied directly by GATE in a centrally administered, international peer review process for quality assurance and improvement, requested on a voluntary basis. The latter use has made it necessary for GATE to develop a system of quality review, including a global registry of qualified external reviewers from more than 20 nations and the establishment of an evaluative process that promotes and maintains educational improvement. The GATE Certification Process, piloted in 1996-1997 and inaugurated at the 1997 annual GATE conference, is coordinated from New Zealand. Institutions of higher education with transnational programs are encouraged to undergo this process of international review.

3. **The need for an international forum to coordinate quality assurance and other activities related to principled advocacy of transnational programs**

   GATE's founding affiliates envisioned a global organization of institutions of higher education, national higher education and quality assurance associations, intergovernmental organizations and national ministries of education, and major corporations dedicated to principled advocacy of transnational educational programs. Further, although higher education is key to GATE's purposes, the organization concerns itself with the full range of education including postsecondary, higher, and post-graduate, and professional continuing education and training. The participants of GATE come from both industrialized and developing countries.

GATE's inaugural global conference took place in London in September 1996, at which the three needs and sets of activities above were endorsed by the participants; an international Board of Directors was appointed; and a Secretariat was named, administered by the Center for Quality Assurance in International Education in Washington, DC. GATE's certification operations were established in 1997 in Wellington, New Zealand. Basic membership for higher education institutions and organizations and governmental agencies is without charge. The greater share of overall funding resources for GATE is borne by the multinational corporate sector.

GATE is a global organization that operates like many organizations with newsletters, access to data bases, invitations to global forums on specific topics of interest, and an annual meeting. GATE's second annual meeting took place October 8-11, 1997, in Washington, DC, USA, and was co-sponsored by the Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education and the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The 1998 GATE Conference is co-sponsored by UNESCO and the OECD and is scheduled in Paris 30 September to 2 October at UNESCO Headquarters in conjunction with the World Conference on Higher Education.

GATE's time is right, and those who have envisioned this new organization look forward to corporate, higher education, governmental, and accreditation communities joining in this much needed and timely partnership. For more information on the origins, purposes, and activities of GATE, please consult our web site at www.edugate.org.

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Do's and Don'ts of Partnerships in International Education

James Evans

Are there any practical guidelines to assist us in determining when to forge international partnerships, in what forms, and with which partners? The presenter's experience has led him to the following observations and advice. Those attending the session are invited to share their own war stories and insights.

1. **Mission comes first.** Cultivating an international partnership is a time-consuming, and therefore costly, activity. Know what your institution wants and needs from its international activities. Measure your potential partners against your mission and strategy. If there is not a fit between institutional missions, a partnership will be problematic.

2. **Simplest is usually best.** Choose the simplest form of partnership that meets the mutual goals of the partner institutions. If your goal is providing international exchange possibilities for students and faculty, a simple affiliation agreement for student and faculty exchange is probably best. If your goal is growth of enrollment and revenue, you may be best served by identifying a local agent or subcontractor to handle in-country services. (Care must obviously be taken here to preserve the integrity of your programs and accreditation status.) If your goal is the transformation of your institution, more elaborate (and hence more costly) structures probably will be required.

3. **Run the numbers, but keep your calculations approximate.** Electronic spreadsheets have made amateur cost accountants of us all. One risk is that we will take our estimates (which are always approximate) too seriously. If you can't make the numbers work by "back of the envelope" calculations, the partnership you are contemplating is probably more expensive than you can afford. Keep your numbers round.

4. **Exercise due diligence.** Don't be afraid to ask direct questions. Negotiating a partnership is a process that involves various stages. There's a "making friends" stage, during which you and your would-be partner get to know one another. Courtship follows, and only if that flourishes does the process need to turn to real negotiating. It is then that you must be able and willing to pose the tough questions. Cultural differences can complicate matters at this stage.

5. **Hope for success, but take a moment to plan for failure.** Every partnership needs a mechanism for cool and cure. Make sure the basic principles and procedures are clear in advance. Set a time limit to the partnership, with a provision for renewal. Decide what can trigger possible termination, what recourse there is in such an event (you don't want every disagreement or misunderstanding–there will inevitably be both–to risk scuttling the entire agreement), and how in general the assets and liabilities are to be distributed. Do not try at this stage to draft a termination memorandum. You cannot anticipate the future that accurately. But make sure both parties understand and agree on the basic principles of amicable dissolution.

6. **Phone home.** Never lose sight of the fact that while a handful of people are busily getting to know and trust one another, those negotiators represent scores or hundreds of colleagues in their respective institutions who are not so intimately involved, have not developed trust in the potential partners, and, being both human and academic, generally think the worst of administrators and suspect them of selling their birthright for *congee* or porridge. You and your counterpart are simultaneously negotiators and diplomats. You've got to keep the folks back home informed, encouraged, sometimes even sold.

7. **Think like the other guy.** Know what (s)he wants out of the agreement. If you cannot imagine what is in it for the partner institution, walk away from the table. Ditto if the deal looks too good to be true. Partnerships work best when grounded in perceived mutual self-interest.

8. **Control is not always the issue.** You don't necessarily need the upper hand. Think twice if you are tempted to hold out for the casting vote in a joint venture: the partnership may be better served by equal votes on both sides of the table. In this structure fundamental disagreements that emerge between the partners lead to deadlock unless the partners…

9. **Keep talking.** Partnerships are based in trust. Trust is achieved, not given. Building and maintaining trust takes continual effort.

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Chapter 6

NCA

Case Studies in Collaboration: Partnerships with Schools

THE Collaborative Imperative

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Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
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A Collaborative Graduate Cohort Program In Teaching and Technology: Lessons Learned

John J. Clementson
Richard Hanson

An Evolution of Collaboration

Close collaboration between Augustana College and a local school district has resulted in the development of a Master's degree in Education that meets teachers' needs for professional development through a cohort approach, while providing both practical and theoretical approaches to the use of technology in the classroom.

The local district and the college share fifteen years of experience in collaborating on professional development workshops. Most recently, the workshop offerings have provided more than a thousand regional teachers with basic computer training. Four years ago, the college and the district came together to design a "Tech Camp for Teachers" to facilitate cooperative learning among K-12 teachers in the area of technology. Through extensive collaborative efforts involving personnel, facilities, and equipment from both education institutions, Tech Camp was offered for the first time in the summer of 1994. Tech Camp was an immediate success as it offered a week of technology workshops for teachers in a relaxed, camp-like atmosphere designed to neutralize any technology fears and to encourage creativity and risk-taking. At the end of the week, teachers were organized into interest groups to develop a classroom project using educational technology. While the final Tech Camp project facilitated collaborative learning—and Tech Camp as a whole generated tremendous enthusiasm about technology in the classroom—we nonetheless realized that a more integrative, in-depth, and less "how to" experience was the next logical step in completely fulfilling the goal of helping teachers to integrate technology fully into their pedagogy and curricula.

The success of Tech Camp enhanced the collaborative relationship between the college and the district. As a result of this collaboration, in the fall of 1994 the school district approached Augustana College with a request to develop collaboratively a pilot master's degree program in technology and teaching. Several contextual factors weighed heavily on the minds of Augustana personnel as they contemplated the proposal.

First, Augustana College has a long history of producing quality educators, and this program would be another opportunity for the college to assert itself as an education leader in the region. Second, and more immediate, was the education department's desire to improve continually its working relationship with the district. The chair of the department, confronted with an ever-increasing number of difficult-to-find practicum and student teacher sites, thought that such a collaborative program would help to gain the confidence and cooperation of local teachers. Third, after discovering that a similar proposal from the school district had been rejected by the two major state universities in the region, Augustana College personnel realized the proposal was an opportunity to respond to the district when other competitor institutions would not. Fourth, Augustana College decision-makers also realized that such a program would generate substantial revenues. Thus, Augustana determined it was important to respond to the challenge, and agreed to cooperate with the district in developing the program for piloting in the summer of 1995. It is important to note that this teaching and technology program was offered within the framework of existing graduate programs in Elementary and Secondary Education, which have a strong liberal studies element.

As is the case in many institutions, Augustana has internal governance structures embedded into the system for purposes of dealing with issues of curriculum change or personnel issues. Because the proposed M.A. was somewhat different from the traditional graduate programs in education, several institutional hurdles needed to be cleared before the program could become a reality. The dean of graduate studies and the chair of education needed to "package" the program in a way that was palatable to the Curriculum Council and to the faculty as a whole. After many planning sessions with the school district, it was jointly decided that this program would need to fall within the framework of existing programs. It would have a liberal arts component as well as the traditional courses taken in graduate programs in education. How then would this be a different program? How could the institution respond to the ever-changing needs of the area schools and their teachers? Would the curriculum needs of the district be met through existing approved courses? Fortunately, the education program was originally designed with courses that were "elastic" in nature. Courses with titles such as "Innovations in Education," "Topics in Education," and "Computers and Education" had built-in flexibility.

Teacher interest in this pilot M.A. program was overwhelming. More than 90 local school teachers applied for the 63 spaces available, and we had inquiries from more than 100 teachers from outside the district. The selection of qualified students was the first collaborative action undertaken by the two education institutions. While the college used its traditional admission standards as a minimum gateway for admission to the pilot program, it also left much of the selection process to the district curriculum and staff development coordinators. According to school district personnel involved in the selection process, participants were selected based on specific interests of the district—a mix of K-12 educators, a substantial number of math and science teachers, and a group representing a broad cross-section of the district's thirty-four different school buildings.

Soon after the selection process was completed and students had started their program of study, it became evident to the instructors that the participants were diverse in their intellectual abilities and in their years of teaching experience. This intellectual diversity created the first dilemma for decision-makers at the college. Should those few students, selected by the district for participation in the program, who had some difficulties with the concepts presented in various courses be asked to leave the program? While 95 percent of the students were truly ready for the rigor of graduate study, a few students needed to be taught how to engage concepts and ideas at a graduate level. The college decided to hold these students to the same admission to candidacy standards as any other graduate student. To the students' and their instructors' credit, these students completed all the requirements for the M.A. degree.

What Have We Learned from the Cohort?

The first cohort group completed the pilot program in July 1997. Remarkably, 62 of the 63 students who started the program graduated this past summer. What made the program a "success"?

While the assessment process is still in progress, preliminary results suggest several factors.

- ○ The program plan of study was sensitive to teachers' schedules and priorities. An advisory council composed of school district staff development professionals, student representatives of the cohort, the Augustana education department, and the graduate dean's office was crucial to the students' empowerment and engagement in the program.
- ○ This innovative liberal studies M.A. emphasized producing more effective classroom teachers who would use what they learned in the program to initiate changes in pedagogy and to improve student learning.
- ○ We have also discovered that the teachers in the cohort developed the kind of esprit de corps that produced lively debate and collaborative interchanges in the classroom—and engaged the participants in examination of their teaching practices.
- ○ The consistent leadership provided by the chair of education and the graduate dean's office was critical to the success of the program.

Empowerment

Empowerment through participation in the planning process produced in the participants an assertive, focused interest in the guidance of the program. The downside to these two developments was what might be expected. While the cohort was fairly large (63), it was still a closed system. People got to know one another very well—for better and for worse. Empowerment was accompanied by an increased sense of responsibility in most participants; however the frustrations of democracy were ever apparent when disagreements among participants arose as to the course of action to take in terms of scheduling and priorities in course content.

A similar healthy tension arose between the participants and the local school district when the district's curriculum objectives for several of the courses were not what the participants believed were relevant. Likewise, a three-way tension was created among the local district, the participants, and the professors at the college when course content priorities did not match. Ultimately, in a graduate program, the authority and responsibility for delivering a program of rigor and integrity must rest with the institution granting the degree. When a collaborative decision-making process becomes out-of-balance, someone loses. Several of the curricular decisions regarding examination of current district practices were considered threats by several of the district's curriculum and staff development personnel. Other curricular decisions were unpopular with the participants in the program. When the district wanted to teach specific software packages or other skill-based technologies, the participants either disagreed with the skill to be taught or they disagreed that the curriculum should be skill-centered at all—believing it should have been more focused on infusion, social impact, concept development, literacy, and access to information as it relates to the Internet and to the use of technology in general. While the Augustana personnel agreed with the participants in part, they faced several dilemmas in this three-way tension.

- ○ If the district was supplying much of the hardware/software and facilities for technology instruction, Augustana personnel felt an obligation to cooperate on this curricular decision. If the district's needs were different from those of their employees, what is the college to say?
- ○ As the program developed, Augustana was unable to hire an educational technologist for the program. While the college already had several accomplished technologists, the expertise of an educational technologist may have been able to provide a different paradigm of technology for the students.
- ○ As Tech Camp became a successful means of training teachers from a five state region, the college may have been stuck in its own paradigm of technology education.
- ○ The rapidly changing face of technology created its own dilemma. As students progressed through a two and one-half year program of study, some of the technology-related content of the program was becoming antiquated. The programs that were current at the beginning of the program were two software releases or more behind by the time the students completed their studies.

Changing Pedagogy

While the recent graduates of the program are just beginning a new school year, there is anecdotal and self-reported evidence that suggests the program had an impact on how teachers approach student learning in the classroom. A recent post-graduation survey revealed professional growth by individuals in the program. The following quotes from cohort participants are representative of the participants' professional development:

- "Being in this program reenergized me as a teacher and taught me skills that make me a better teacher."
- "There is very little about the program that I haven't found useful almost daily at school. In many respects this was the best educational experience I've *ever* had."
- "Each project, reading assignment etc., was a growth experience for me."
- "An excellent opportunity for an educator—came at a time in my career when I needed to evaluate what I was doing and how I was teaching. Provided growth for me professionally."
- "I felt the professors were personally involved in our educational growth."
- "Terrific opportunity to grow professionally—I'm a better teacher because of it."

Esprit de Corps

We have also discovered that when a cohort is relatively homogeneous as in this case where all the teachers were employees of the same school district—that competitiveness runs rather high. Again, this has an upside and a downside. Projects and papers produced in the program, for instance, were excellent—better than those seen in other graduate programs offered through the same department. The cost of this excellence, however, was rivalry amongst the participants, and a good deal of stress. To address this situation, instructors employed a number of cooperative/team teaching strategies to encourage collaborative interchange and to develop a togetherness rather than a separateness. The following comments from cohort participants are representative of the cohesiveness that emerged from the program:

- "I appreciate the efforts to make the cohort something special. I enjoyed the teamwork–the open and innovative thinking of the professors."
- "It was a life-changing experience! I especially valued it as a cohort program rather than an individual masters program."
- "I really appreciated the support of other cohort members."
- "Going through the program with fellow teachers taking the same course work was super!"
- "Being allowed to work cooperatively on a number of projects eased some of the stress of being a student while working full-time."

Consistent Leadership

Perhaps the greatest lesson learned from this program is that collaboration with teachers, school districts, and college personnel requires consistent leadership. As qualitative researchers suggest, an "indwelling" must occur if one is to understand the internal workings of a collaborative cohort. For the most part, a small handful of individuals dedicated their professional and sometimes personal energies to the administration of the cohort. Because of the aforementioned tensions created by various curriculum decisions, the leaders needed, at times, to be mediators, counselors, confidantes, and creative problem-solvers. The cohort group had a pulse that needed to be listened to. The advisor board was one vehicle for communication, but living with the cohort became the best way to learn what was concerning the participants.

As the program progressed, the school district staff development personnel became less involved. As personnel changes occurred, the cohort participants expressed some sense of abandonment by their own district. The following comments are reflective of the participants' feelings about the collaboration with Augustana College and with their school district:

- "I felt the Augie folks were really concerned about the students and worked well in a cooperative effort."
- "I found that working with the people at Augie brought a closeness that enhanced learning. Sharing and expressing ideas is so much easier when you know and respect the people involved in the program."
- "I am so grateful for this opportunity! I appreciated everything everyone at Augustana did to make it a success."
- "The *human* element was very much appreciated."
- "Sometimes my own district's collaboration was detrimental to the course of study."
- "I thought the school district did a poor job. They weren't organized and were more confusing to me than they were helpful."

Conclusion

Augustana College, like other institutions, continues to wrestle with how to develop healthy school/college programs that respond to the needs of the learning community, while at the same time maintain the academic integrity of the institution. The rewards of such a venture have been great, but they have not come without risk or without strain on the institutions and individuals involved as students, professors, and administrators. Would the college enter into such a collaboration again?

The initial interest and subsequent success of the pilot program convinced Augustana that another cohort should start as soon as the first cohort completed their studies. The second cohort group has completed the first course in the program.

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A Collaboration to Improve the Teaching of Science and Mathematics in the Public Schools

Smith Holt
Robert Howard

The Need and the Organization

Producing better trained science and mathematics teachers is a complex task that requires creative approaches applied to the entire teacher preparation system. Collaboration between many participating players–higher education institutions, public schools, professional organizations, government, and the public–is essential in any successful approach to the problem. Collaboration is clearly necessary to secure political and financial resources that are required even to begin to address the problem. Perhaps more importantly, collaboration helps to stimulate the creativity necessary to approach this challenging problem in new ways; and it provides a strong feedback mechanism that makes the new approaches self-correcting.

The Oklahoma Teacher Education Collaborative (O-TEC) is a statewide collaboration that seeks to prepare teachers to meet student needs in science and mathematics. The participants include Oklahoma State University, the University of Tulsa, the University of Oklahoma, the University of Central Oklahoma, Northeastern State University, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Langston University, Cameron University, Tulsa Community College, the Oklahoma Science Teachers Association (OSTA), the Oklahoma Council of Teachers of Mathematics (OCTM), and the Coalition for the Advancement of Mathematics and Science Education in Oklahoma (CASMEO). At the national level, O-TEC works closely with the National Science Resources Center.

Within the collaboration, each institution brings its own special resources to bear in addressing the problem. For example Oklahoma State University, a lead institution in O-TEC, participates in the range of group efforts (described below) and also provides unique contributions through its Star Schools program, which stresses use of modern technology in the public school classroom and comprehensive in-service training.

The Vision

The glue that holds any collaboration as diverse as O-TEC together must be a shared vision of the anticipated goal. All of the O-TEC participants share a common perspective of the important elements of teacher education. The vision is systemic in nature (Senge 1990): teacher education begins with recruitment, continues with education at the college level, and extends into early experiences as a certified teacher (Lawson 1992). O-TEC institutions believe that the process of preparing teachers in science and mathematics from pre-service through in-service should be:

- **Field-based:** Teachers learn to teach best in elementary or secondary classrooms under the guidance of a master teacher.
- **Exploratory.** Teachers should learn that process skills and the techniques of investigation are the essential elements of science and mathematics.

◇ **Technology/issue oriented.** Teachers should be prepared for the increasing role modern technology will play in classroom activities.

◇ **Seamless.** Teachers should be trained in a way that prevents sharp boundaries between disciplines, grade levels.

◇ **Network forming.** Teachers should be part of a supportive network. A feeling of collaboration and the bonds of professionalism should be fostered at all levels, from students interested in a teaching career through accomplished teachers, to university professors.

Design and Collaborative Activities

This common vision drives a collaborative strategy that addresses the entire teacher preparation system from recruitment, through pre-service preparation, into initial and long-term in-service. The O-TEC strategy (1) develops common innovative ways to promote careers in mathematics and science teaching, (2) builds on the experience of other collaborative projects and teacher input to provide a high quality pre-service education, (3) expands the support network new teachers are provided in science and mathematics during their entry years of professional service, (4) supplies timely training for experienced teachers, and (5) promotes effective communication among collaborating partners to share successes and identify potential problem areas. Collaboration is fundamental in the design of the programs that follow this strategy. The programs include:

◇ **Summer teaching academies,** a collaboration between higher education institutions and the public schools. They provide summer teaching experiences, under mentor teachers, focused on inquiry-centered mathematics and sciences for high school and university students. These are designed to attract more young people from Oklahoma's diverse populations to careers as teachers of science and mathematics.

◇ Collaborative efforts to **reform science and mathematics general education courses** offered to the elementary and secondary education students based on current research (Brooks and Brooks 1993 or Parry 1993, for instance) and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and National Science Education standards. These courses are inquiry-centered and technology supported.

◇ **Meaningful and early field experiences** involving modern curricula under the direction of master teachers in classrooms with students from diverse backgrounds. Each student is placed with a teacher or trained mentor who puts into practice the philosophical underpinnings of O-TEC institutions. O-TEC higher education institutions have partnered with school districts across the state to develop and identify schools and classrooms where hands-on science and mathematics are presented to diverse audiences. Many of these districts have high populations of Native American students.

◇ **Revised methods courses** to build on the science and mathematics taught in the general education science coursework referred to above. This requires collaboration among faculty to integrate complex structures of science and mathematics with the ways they are taught and used in society in a way directly supported in the NRC's Standards.

◇ Formalized collaboration with public schools through the addition of a **Master-Teacher-In-Residence (MTIR)** to the instructional staff at each institution. Each MTIR is an active participant in planning and implementing all of the reform efforts and serves as an important interface between the higher education institutions and the public schools.

◇ Collaboration to **enhance post entry-year retention** by (1) a post-entry year summer in-service offered for new teachers, using faculty from multiple institutions; (2) workshops for teachers and building administrators who serve on entry-year committees; (3) a professional induction seminar to be held collaboratively with the state professional societies for science and mathematics teaching at their professional meetings; (4) opportunities for consultation and support provided by the Master-Teachers-In-Residence and university faculty; (5) materials support program that lends exemplary materials to new teachers who lack access, and electronic access via video and the internet to the home campus; (6) introduction of modern technology into the classroom and instruction in its use; and (7) statewide, comprehensive, in-service training/professional development to introduce inquiry-based methodology to currently practicing teachers.

Current Status

The collaboration received funding from the National Science Foundation in June 1996. Since then a number of significant milestones have been reached.

- **Summer academies.** In the summer of 1997 three science/mathematics "camps" were conducted by Southwest Oklahoma State University and two school districts, Langston University and Oklahoma State University and four school districts, and the University of Tulsa and three school districts. Evaluations showed the programs influenced high school and college students toward careers in science and mathematics teaching, that the instructed children developed a strong appreciation of hands-on science, and that parents and the participating communities became more supportive of new methods of science teaching and teacher training.

- **Course reform.** Course reform has been initiated at all participating institutions. During the first year, 17 courses at five institutions with an expected annual enrollment of 1775 students were revised. Reforms have occurred in science, mathematics, and education courses.

  Reform is approaching completion at Oklahoma State University, and the results anticipate those expected elsewhere. A totally new twelve hour integrated course based on a laboratory format utilizing directed inquiry was instituted in January of 1998. Enrollment preference is given to elementary education students, but the level and approach are suitable for all. Stimulated by this effort, an open-inquiry approach to the teaching of general chemistry is being piloted.

  Master-Teachers-In-Residence have played significant roles in course reform by emphasizing the importance of hands-on discovery activities and by providing important classroom perspectives. Monthly meetings of MTIRs from all institutions allow them to share results.

  Several statewide workshops have been held for those who have redesigned courses to share their results with others in the state. The workshops, held in science the first year and mathematics the second, stimulated both interest in the new techniques and new collaborations among institutions. The innovations developed at one institution were transported to a new institution and adapted to fit the new educational environment.

- **Professional development.** In August of 1997 sixteen elementary teachers (K-6) from two high minority districts in the OSU area began a pilot professional development program in inquiry-based science utilizing Full Option Science System (FOSS), Insights, and Science and Technology for Children Curriculum (STC) modules. These widely-tested and grade-specific resource materials were introduced into the classroom in September. The teachers were trained on a second module in December and the modules introduced into the classroom in January.

  A statewide awareness-building workshop, attended by 150 teachers and administrators, was conducted in November. A strategic planning workshop for 100 of the attendees will be held in June. The intended result is to stimulate the large scale introduction of inquiry-based learning into public schools across the state.

  Workshops in the utilization of open and directed inquiry in the teaching of chemistry and biology were conducted in the summer of 1997 and will be repeated in the summer of 1998.

Lessons of Collaboration

Even though the O-TEC collaboration has less than two years of experience, it already provides a case study that illustrates how cooperation among higher education institutions plays a central role in educational reform. Collaboration has increased political clout and attracted financial support—anticipated benefits and keys to achieving any sort of reform in the educational delivery system. However, there have been a number of secondary but extremely important additional benefits.

- **Collaboration helps build a critical mass of faculty committed to reform.** While each institution had faculty members who were very interested in teacher preparation and committed to change, they were limited in number and distributed across several departments and colleges. There was little communication, and actions tended to be those of individuals. By bringing together faculty from a number of institutions, a critical mass of faculty acting more collectively produced much more significant results.

An added benefit was that collaboration among institutions tended to produce more collaboration within an institution. A striking example came from one O-TEC workshop. The faculty from one institution noted that the first time all of those interested in math/science teacher preparation had ever talked was in a van traveling to the workshop at another institution.

- ◇ **Collaboration helps participants identify what works.** Collaboration allows multiple implementations of a test program under slightly different conditions to experiment with new ideas. By comparing the results, it is possible to judge innovations. The three O-TEC Summer Academy programs, for instance, all addressed slightly different audiences (grade level, urban/rural, diverse cultural background) and positive results from all provided strong evidence that the idea has potential merit and an informational data base on successful implementation.
- ◇ **Collaboration helps make problems self-correcting.** Just as multiple successes tend to validate a reform, innovations that do not function well at several sites clearly have a basic flaw. In our experience, the interaction of a group of institutions helps make these problems self-correcting. The group either has an array of suggestions to correct the problem (an array made larger by multiple implementations under varying conditions) or a desire to drop the program and move forward elsewhere.
- ◇ **Collaboration helps make educational reform a continuing process rather than an isolated event.** When institutions act in isolation, reform often is an event where change occurs in a single incremental step. Collaboration, which provides both a continuous source of new ideas and an atmosphere where change is less threatening because others are taking similar risks, promotes an atmosphere of change and helps make reform a continuing process.

Given the nature of the collaboration and the broad diversity of the institutions and their missions, these lessons should have broad applicability.

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The Pueblo Alliance: An Example of School/University Collaboration

Stephen D. Bronn

Introduction

The Alliance is a collaborative partnership between the University of Southern Colorado (USC) and Pueblo School District No. 60 (Dist. 60) that was formally implemented in July 1991 following an eight-month planning period and is still operating after nearly seven years. The objective of the Alliance is simple—improving the delivery of educational services, at all levels, to students in Pueblo, Colorado. While there are numerous examples of school/university collaborative projects, the Alliance is unique in the structure and scope of the endeavor. The Alliance (1) is formally recognized through a contract between Dist. 60's Board of Education (School Board) and USC's governing board, (2) integrates administrative functions between the two organizations, and (3) links programmatic functions from business services to academics. This paper will discuss the development, maturation, and current status of the Alliance.

The Alliance Partners

Pueblo, a city of 105,000 located in southern Colorado, is served by a regional university (USC), a community college, and a public school system (Dist. 60). Though Pueblo is a regional retail, distribution, and health center for southern Colorado, its economy, historically, has been centered around manufacturing and production. The population of the community is diverse, with approximately 42% of Hispanic heritage.

USC's emphasis is as an undergraduate institution focusing on career oriented programs, but with a selected number of masters' programs. University enrollment is 4,200 for the Pueblo campus with another 1,000 students served through off-campus offerings. The total operating budget for USC is approximately $45,000,000 including auxiliary operations.

District No. 60 is the public school system for the city of Pueblo, serving approximately 18,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Dist. 60 operates with four high schools, an alternate school, 6 middle schools, and 21 elementary schools, with a total operating budget of approximately $115,000,000 including auxiliary and categorical funding.

Planning for the Alliance

The concept of a partnership grew out of conversations among educational leaders in the fall of 1990. USC had recently restructured and implemented a new strategic plan, in response partially to pressure for USC to become more responsive to the needs of the community. Dist. 60 was contemplating a similar endeavor, in part to respond to a need to improve the educational preparation of its students.

Pueblo was not in an educational crisis; however, all of the normal complaints concerning preparation for work and for college existed within the community. Community and business leaders were asking why the two primary educational institutions could not collaborate to improve education. USC's experience in planning and restructuring and recent successes in community involvement were viewed as advantages that could assist Dist. 60. Thus, USC and Dist. 60 agreed to cooperate by (1) implementing administrative integration, (2) completing a strategic and restructuring plan for Dist. 60, (3) implementing a variety of immediate linkages to demonstrate collaboration, and (4) forming a national advisory board to assist the Alliance partners.

Administrative Integration

The autonomy of each institution is viewed as fundamental by the Alliance partners and is the foundation of the contractual agreement between the parties. Administrative integration, however, is necessary to spark collaboration between the institutions. Integration was initially accomplished by (1) appointing Dist. 60's superintendent as a vice president at USC, with responsibility for collaborative programs, and (2) giving USC's president responsibility in Dist. 60 for strategic planning. These executive roles are recognized contractually in the formal agreement between the School Board and USC's governing board.

Administrative integration has expanded beyond the chief executives. Expansion has occurred both as a result of planning and by taking advantage of opportunities provided by retirements and resignations. Combined positions and services include joint physical plant management, a joint safety office, joint purchasing services, joint printing services, joint technology management, joint public relations, and a joint chief business officer.

While administrative collaboration is important, it is not the primary focus of the Alliance. The primary objective of the Alliance is to improve educational outcomes for students, which is to occur through improved educational programs. The administrative integration that was specifically designed to improve education is the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Research (CTLR). The CTLR is the unit responsible for USC's undergraduate teacher preparation program and for Dist. 60's professional development programs. The CTLR is administered by the Deputy Superintendent for Instruction in Dist. 60, who also carries the title of Dean in recognition of responsibilities for the teacher education program. The CTLR, designed by a special task force of USC and Dist. 60 faculty and teachers, has as an objective the infusion of practical insights into the teacher preparation program and the provision of professional educator involvement in the staff development program.

Strategic Planning

A broad based Dist. 60 strategic planning process was completed by July 1991. The resulting plan was implemented and then subsequently revised in 1995. USC's strategic plan was also revised, with Dist. 60 involvement, to recognize the Alliance. A major component of Dist. 60's plan was a commitment to administrative restructuring within the school district that resulted in the reallocation of 7.5% of the general fund budget from non-instructional to instructional purposes. The reallocation was accomplished through streamlining of central administration, closing of non-efficient sites, making athletics an auxiliary operation, integrating administrative functions with USC, and appropriate privatization of services.

A second component of the Dist. 60 plan was a commitment to site management at the local school level. The administrative restructuring made it possible for Dist. 60 to nearly double the non-personnel operating budgets for individual school sites.

Linkages

Collaborative projects between USC and Dist. 60, called linkages, could exist without the Alliance or a formal agreement; however, the formation of linkages is easier because of the Alliance. Examples of linkages for the Alliance include the following.

◇ **Center for Teaching, Learning, and Research.** The Center is the consolidated unit responsible for the undergraduate teacher preparation program at USC and Dist. 60's staff development program.

◇ **Pueblo School for Arts and Sciences.** The Pueblo School for Arts and Sciences (PSAS) is an integrated K-12 charter school from Dist. 60, which is operated by USC via a management contract. PSAS opened in 1994-95 with grades K-9 and expanded to a full K-12 operation in 1997-98. The mission of PSAS is to provide a balanced curriculum anchored in the arts and in harmony with the sciences. PSAS is creating an educational environment where all students, including those traditionally thought of as "at-risk," are encouraged and expected to succeed. The school utilizes community partnerships, is based upon Paideia principles, and provides instruction through an "untracked" curriculum that emphasizes excellence and high expectations. PSAS principal, teachers, and support staff are employees of USC and the school's principal is a dean at USC.

◇ **Community compact.** This is a cooperative of the Alliance partners, the local community college, and local business organizations (funded partially by PEW) designed to improve instruction through the implementation of standards based education and a school-to-work curriculum.

◇ **Senior-to-sophomore.** This cooperative program between academic departments at USC and Dist. 60 high schools permits the high schools to offer approved college courses on the high school campus. Courses are taught by high school instructors under the supervision of USC academic departments. Students earn both high school and college credit for each course and therefore are not required to pay tuition. The program permits students to enter college with earned credit, thus lowering the cost of college.

◇ **Science articulation.** This program resulted in the alignment of Dist. 60's science curriculum with university expectations, thus providing for a smoother transition between high school and college for Dist. 60 students. Through this cooperative program all Dist. 60 elementary teachers have been trained in a new science curriculum, joint research projects between district and university teachers have developed, and USC science faculty members are involved with the public schools for both research and service.

◇ **Student mentors.** This joint program between Dist. 60 counselors and USC's student services division places USC students as mentors for at-risk middle and high school students. The participating mentors receive service learning experience for their work.

◇ **Nursing.** This joint program between USC's Nursing department and the Health program in Dist. 60 utilizes USC students to provide nursing support to elementary schools. USC students are provided clinical experience in pediatric nursing while the elementary schools receive professional support that would not otherwise be available.

◇ **Library.** Through this linkage USC and high school libraries are interconnected via a common data system. Students in one site are able to access the collections at any other site and a distribution system makes the holdings available where needed.

◇ **Summer reading.** The summer reading program, implemented through the CTLR and Dist. 60's Title 1 program, brings together district teachers, USC education students, CTLR faculty, and disadvantaged elementary students for an intensive supplemental summer program.

◇ **Music and art.** The music and art faculties from USC and Dist. 60 share visiting artist presentations among the various sites. Both institutions collaborate to offer a community symphony orchestra for Pueblo.

◇ **Technology support.** This joint program provides work opportunities for USC students in a public school setting to implement technology improvements.

◇ **Alliance grants center.** This joint grants and sponsored programs center, supported by both institutions, serves the Alliance.

Success and Results

The Alliance has been successful in attracting attention to Pueblo, USC, and Dist. 60, and thereby increasing our ability to generate additional resources through grants. However, the Alliance has not been uniformly successful in convincing its internal public that the collaboration results in improved student performance. Thus far we know that:

○ students participating in senior-to-sophomore perform as well or better in subsequent USC courses and receive an economic benefit;

○ although science requirements in Dist. 60 have improved, general science performance has not yet shown a dramatic gain;

○ USC teacher education students indicate that they are better prepared for the classroom environment;

○ the academic preparation of entering USC students from Dist. 60 has improved slightly in the past five years.

The response to the Alliance by faculty, teachers, and other employee groups is mixed. There is the expectation among some that the Alliance is an independent resource that should be used to expand their programs or services, and there is also a fear among certain employees that the Alliance will eliminate jobs or move functions. Fear of job loss has been most evident in the physical plants where unions at USC and Dist. 60 were successful in forestalling any integration of services. Consequently, the institutions have determined that it is no longer feasible to operate with joint physical plant management. The technology and computing staffs at both USC and Dist. 60 have not been able to integrate successfully; therefore, the combined technology management position is also being discontinued.

The Colorado State Auditor recently completed a review of the Alliance for the purpose of determining whether the collaboration was beneficial and could be replicated. The Auditor's report concluded that the benefits of the Alliance generally outweigh the related costs, that the Alliance should be continued, and that Dist. 60 and USC should be commended for implementing innovative measures to improve education, reduce costs, and increase efficiency. The Auditor's report did not conclude that the Alliance could be replicated because the Alliance's existence is partially dependent upon the unique nature of Pueblo's history with cooperative projects and is also partially a function of the regional mission for USC.

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P-16 Standards-Based Education: An Idea Whose Time Has Come

Francis A. Griffith

Several agencies, such as the Wingspread Group (1993), the American Federation of Teachers (1994), The Education Trust (Haycock 1996), The Education Commission of the States (1996), and the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996), and writers, such as Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley (1994), Ruth Mitchell (1995), Robert B. Barr and John Tagg (1995), Janice Weinman (1995), and Francis A. (Jerry) Griffith (1995, 1996) have cited an urgent need for P-12 schools and higher education institutions to work together to reform P-12 schools and higher education simultaneously. Higher education institutions must recognize that, as a result of their standards-based educational experiences, incoming students will be increasingly better prepared than and hold different expectations from students in the past. Teacher-education programs must also modify their programs to reflect the new roles and responsibilities of teachers in standards-based schools. Barriers to collaboration between P-12 and higher education must be acknowledged and systematically eliminated.

Standards-based education is a major force for educational change that "...represents a radical and pervasive shift that cannot be dismissed as transitory" (Mitchell 1995, p. 7).

> ...standards and their concomitant assessments begin a chain of responses that ultimately affects the whole system. Teachers find they need to add to students' knowledge and skills by changing their curriculum and pedagogy, but in turn the teachers themselves need to acquire additional abilities, which frequently means demands on university academic faculty...(p. 8).

Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley (1995) and Janice Weinman (1995), of the College Board, both noted that P-12 reforms will prepare students more effectively for college in the future:

> ...In the next few years we will see growing numbers of better-prepared, highly motivated students graduating from high school and entering college. ...Early signs suggest that we have reasons for optimism about high-school students' performance. If the progress continues, will college be ready for them? (p. B1).

Weinman (1995) reported that

> ...Active learning is far different from the type of learning that goes on in the large lecture class, which is still the dominant mode of instruction in many undergraduate courses. Unfortunately, many universities, constrained by limited and diminishing resources, may be tempted to continue or even to increase their reliance on this method of instruction during the next few years. If so, they could be on a collision course with students' expectations for more-interesting, student-centered teaching. Institutions' problems with student engagement and retention could grow worse ...(p. B1).

Rodriguez and Fulford (1994) pointed out that, for new teachers to be successful in P-12 standards-based schools, their professional-education programs must provide them a variety of strategies for teaching that reflect best practice in such schools. Novice teachers need to know about team-teaching, the use of technology in teaching and assessment, and various forms of active learning.

> Similarly, the role of the instructor in higher education must be re-evaluated: In contrast to higher education's penchant for "talking heads," K-12 standards-based education promotes the role of teacher as "coach" or "guide on the side." In these K-12 models, the teacher is a facilitator of student learning, rather than a fount of wisdom, and the students take much greater responsibility for their own learning. Consequently, new teaching strategies, such as cooperative/collaborative learning see much greater use in the public schools than in higher education, where the claim of too-large classes is used to justify outmoded instructional methods (Griffith 1995, p. 12).

Linda Darling-Hammond (1996) described the future role of teachers in standards-based schools as "...an instructional leader who orchestrates learning experiences in response to curriculum goals and student needs and who coaches students to high levels of independent performance" (p. 196). She also held the opinion that:

> If teachers are to be ready to help their students meet the new standards now being set for them, teacher preparation and professional development programs must consciously examine the expectations embodied in new curriculum frameworks and assessments and understand what they imply for teaching and for learning to teach. Then they must develop effective strategies for preparing teachers in these much more demanding ways (p. 197).

Griffith (1995) noted that:

> [Higher education's] exams are almost exclusively summative, whereas in standards-based schools they often are diagnostic, or formative. Like standards-based schools, higher education should precede high-stakes graded exams or demonstrations with formative assessment (e.g., brief in-class quizzes, outlines, rough drafts of papers or projects, or demonstrations of skills) to help students determine their readiness for an exam. Such formative information also suggests ways the instructor can change his or her behavior in relation to the students, to help them achieve at high levels (pp. 12-13).

Appleberry (1994) stated that it is a well-known secret in academe that most curricula are designed to meet the needs of faculty, not students. The extent to which college curricula meet students' real-world needs is often accidental, rather than intentional. To design curricula that truly meet the needs of students will require higher education to consult people outside the academy, especially employers of program graduates, to determine whether its curricula prepare students to meet the demands of the workplace and responsible citizenship. Faculty may have to relinquish certain courses, which reflect their individual interests and areas of research, for the sake of courses that meet student needs–and standards–more effectively. Liberal arts and vocational preparation can, and should, be complementary and valued equally.

> In the ideal, the amount and quality of student learning should be determined at specific intervals via relevant measures (benchmarks), and students should be informed how well they are progressing toward the performance-based standards set for their graduation. When a student is not progressing satisfactorily, the college should intervene with help, so the student can eventually meet the high standards, even if it takes him or her longer to do so than the other students.
>
> When a student passes the bar exam or the exam for a medical license, the certificate does not tell how long it took, but it does signify that specific standards were met. We must trade our concern for getting people 'out' of the institution for getting them educated before they can get out (Griffith 1995, p. 13).

Several significant barriers exist that could prevent the creation of a seamless standards-based educational system extending from pre-school through all levels of higher education and beyond.

The success of the K-12 standards-based reforms will require major changes in pre-service teacher preparation. In states such as Colorado, future teachers must earn a degree in an academic content area; they cannot major in Education, per se. This means that most future teachers enroll in majors within Colleges of Arts and Sciences (A & S), where A & S faculty members are responsible for helping them learn to teach the subject matter of their disciplines. Unfortunately, many of these faculty members were not formally taught to teach, and even more of them were not taught to teach teachers. These faculty members are not prepared to model in their classrooms the kind of pedagogy and assessments of learning future teachers will need to be successful in P-12 standards-based schools.

Rodriguez and Fulford (1994) reported that:

> School reform advocates contend that because different students learn in different ways, a variety of teaching approaches should be available. They also suggest students need to learn in ways that reflect the expectations of the workplace and society as a whole. Learning models for restructured schools include teamwork, group problem solving, and experiential practice. Higher education could support these learning practices by adopting them in undergraduate programs (p. 4).

The Goals 2000 standards recognized the critical nature of ongoing professional development for teachers:

> The nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century (Goals 2000: Educate America Act, PL 103-277).

According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996),

> Throughout their careers, teachers should have ongoing opportunities to update their skills...teachers should have access to networks, school-university partnerships, and academies where they can connect with colleagues to study subject matter teaching, new pedagogies, and school change. These opportunities should offer sustained work on problems of

> practice that are directly connected to teachers' work and student learning. They should allow for in-depth inquiry, peer coaching, and sharing of knowledge so that real transformations of practice are possible (p. 21).

If higher education is to maintain its role as a source of professional development for P-12 teachers, it must develop programs responsive to the emerging needs of teachers in rapidly-changing SBE schools.

Focused faculty development programs are needed that reflect the role and mission of the institution with respect to its expectations for teaching, assessment of student learning, and course/curriculum development. These expectations should be aligned with P-12 reforms: (1) to enable higher-education faculty members to participate in, or provide, meaningful inservice programs for practicing SBE teachers, and (2) to create a seamless P-16 SBE system.

Most faculty members will need to increase their knowledge about academic and work-place standards, performance-based assessment, students' varied learning styles, cooperative/ collaborative learning in large classes, how to fold technology into a standards-based education framework, and how to teach for success (coach).

In its September 1996 summary report, "What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future," the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future stated:

> Clearly, if students are to achieve high standards, we can expect no less from their teachers and other educators. The first priority is reaching agreements on what teachers should know and be able to do in order to help students succeed (p. 18).

If we are to hold college and university faculty members accountable for the quality of their teaching and assessment, there must be standards to which they are held accountable as well as adequate resources to help them change. There must also be appropriate rewards for meeting the institution's expectations, including those for leadership in simultaneous reform of P-12 and higher education. Faculty members will need to develop formative assessment plans that include specific goals for improving their teaching, assessment, and course development during a given time period. The extent to which they meet these goals should be reflected in evaluations that relate directly to considerations for promotion, tenure, and merit pay.

Permanent bridges must be built between P-12 and higher education. The authors of the Wingspread Group's report, "An American Imperative, Higher Expectations for Higher Education" (1993) called for the simultaneous reform of K-12 schools and higher education:

> It is no longer tolerable for so many in higher education to complain about the quality of those they admit, but do nothing to set higher standards and work with colleagues in K-12 schools to help students attain those standards (p. 19).
>
> A serious, sustained dialogue should start by identifying shared needs and problems:
>
> - clear public definition of what students should know and be able to do at each educational level;
> - standards of entry and exit for higher education;
> - increasing the use of assessment to diagnose learning needs and enhance student achievement;
> - improving both the theory and practice of teaching and learning;
> - reducing the barriers to inter-institutional transfer among institutions of higher education.... (p. 20).

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Chapter 7

NCA

Program Review

THE Collaborative Imperative

103rd Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
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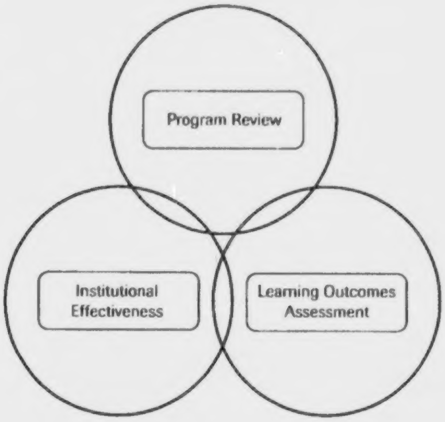
Journey Toward Quality: An Outcomes-Based Approach to Program Review

Joanna Michelich
Beth Price
Ellie Strang

Introduction

> *Begin with the end in mind.*
>
> – Stephen G. Covey

Not unlike many other community colleges, Central Arizona College (CAC) began its journey several years ago toward becoming a data-driven, results-oriented, and outcomes-based institution. And not unlike the passengers' experiences during a lengthy car trip across the country, our institution's journey has included a number of false starts, bumpy roads, detours, and delays. Many faculty and staff, for example, perceived learning outcomes assessment, program review, and institutional effectiveness measures as three distinct initiatives and were skeptical as to how data would be used. Over the past several years, however, we are witnessing a transformation among the faculty and staff as they understand the importance of utilizing data from each of these for continuous improvement in educational programs and in student learning. The following diagram depicts these relationships:



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Central Arizona College's experience in developing an outcomes-based approach to program review may provide assistance to other colleges as they proceed with their own journeys.

Looking Back: Program Review

CAC's history with program review began in 1991 when, in preparation for its 1992 NCA evaluation, the Vice President of Educational Programs and Services adapted a program review format from a leading community college. Since then, a Program Review Committee of faculty, staff, and administrators has reviewed all of its program areas over a five-year period, making improvements annually in obtaining data as indicators of program quality. Although the committee attempted to align its efforts with those of the Learning Outcomes Committee and also with efforts to improve institutional effectiveness, the focus was often on process, program inputs, and quantitative information. The program review process provided lots of data about programs; however, program faculty were unclear about the relationship of the data to measures of achievement. Moreover, there was skepticism about its purpose. As a result, the onus for interpretation and evaluation of programs was placed on the committee rather than program faculty.

Looking Back: Learning Outcomes Assessment

The impetus for CAC's first efforts to develop a formalized program for the assessment of students' academic achievement was also preparation for its 1992 NCA visit. Work on developing a plan for learning outcomes assessment began with the appointment of a faculty committee. The committee quickly found itself facing faculty skepticism, and the Vice President responded by developing a variety of methods to inform, educate, and support the faculty in their endeavors to articulate outcomes and assess learning. Progress was slow as this change in focus required faculty adaptation to a changing college culture. Not surprisingly, therefore, the NCA team that visited in 1992 found CAC's assessment program lacking and called for a focused visit in three years. As a result, the Vice President and the Learning Outcomes Committee worked diligently to move assessment into the forefront of faculty thinking. In the past three years, the faculty have agreed upon general education learning outcomes, and a number of assessment activities were piloted and implemented at the course, program, campus, and institutional levels.

When the NCA team conducted its focused visit in 1995, it found that CAC was on track for developing and implementing its plan for the assessment of student academic achievement and cited a number of examples it termed "outstanding" and evidence of "assessment at its best"; however, it also recommended that we incorporate assessment of student academic achievement as a component of program review. It became clearer to the Program Review Committee members that we needed to focus on learning outcomes in the program review process if we were genuinely committed to continuous improvement in our educational programs and services.

Our Governing Board also aided our outcomes-based journey this fall semester. After critiquing its own operations a few years ago, the Board adopted Policy Governance last year. In keeping with that direction, the Board spent many hours in lengthy work sessions articulating its outcomes policies in the form of a set of explicit expectations (knowledge, behaviors, and competencies) for students receiving associate degrees from CAC. These student learning outcomes will now be utilized as a basis for reviewing and revising our associate degrees.

Looking Back: Institutional Effectiveness

The effectiveness of an institution is determined by its answer to this question: "Are students learning what they need to succeed?" At CAC students complete surveys annually that qualitatively respond to the question through satisfaction with learning, support services, teaching, etc. The Learning Outcomes Committee found that many of the questions contained in the annual surveys directly pertained to learning occurring in the classroom. Faculty members began to review the surveys carefully, and they chose specific questions to be used as affective, indirect measures of outcomes.

As part of its institutional effectiveness measures, CAC administers ACT's Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency in critical thinking, mathematics, English, and reading. Faculty have also begun to develop pre- and post-tests in disciplines, portfolio projects, etc., to measure cognitive learning directly in their own classrooms.

CAC currently uses additional standards, within an effectiveness matrix, as a framework in which to improve academic and administrative programs. The important outcome from this process is the affirmation that *all* programs within the institution are continuously improving. Program review is one part of that process. The development of the institution's effectiveness plan gave faculty an appreciation for how program review fits into the total picture.

Present Status of Program Review

Early in 1997 the Program Review Committee developed guidelines to facilitate consistency and understanding of both the review process and the committee's expectations to make the process outcomes-based. The committee wrote *The CAC Program Review Guide,* which includes **standards,** based on identified and agreed upon **criteria,** and actions, which are to assist the preparer to include necessary information.

The following information summarizes current guidelines for report preparation:

- Each program to be reviewed is assigned a member of the committee to assist as a mentor so that questions or problems with the report itself may be corrected before submission.
- The academic department in which the program resides must also review and evaluate the report; this step has been one of the most valuable aspects of the process from which have come many good ideas for improvement, expansion, and other changes.
- Reports begin with the program's own mission or objectives and the relationship of the program to the College's mission. These, in turn, direct outcome goals. Assessment of organizational support (e.g., budget, facilities, staff); faculty (e.g., part-time/full-time ratio, credentials); and curriculum contribute data used to evaluate needs, excesses, satisfaction, or areas that merit closer scrutiny.
- Within each criterion category, the report includes analytical statements related to the standard listed. Data to support these analyses may be included in a narrative, but preparers are encouraged to place data in appendices. College-generated data have been formatted to provide consistency within committee parameters with program-generated investigations formatted at will.

Report evaluations are made by each committee member as follows:

- The single most important portion of the report and of the subsequent review is the evaluation of outcomes. Did the program achieve its own objectives or goals? Did these objectives contribute to the effectiveness of CAC? Did the program meet the expectations of the students? Of the community? What did students learn?
- A summary of strengths and areas for improvement is included at the end of the report, including outcomes of both the departmental and program reviews. Action plans are to be included for areas of concern. It is expected that each program thoroughly assess its own strengths and weaknesses.
- As each member of the committee reads each report, numerical ratings for all criteria and standards are made along with comments related to the report, adequacy of data, and an overall commentary regarding quality of the report. It should be noted, however, that these initial ratings are qualitative only; the committee as a whole discusses each of the standards separately, the program as a whole, and makes recommendations accordingly to the Vice President.

Future Directions

We have been very pleased with the results of our outcomes-based program review process in its first year. The reports themselves have been good. Even though the new format requires somewhat more work in the writing of the report, the standardized format mitigates it somewhat. The amount of genuine analysis and assessment of program strengths and weaknesses by reviewers has been excellent. Initial resistance to the review process previously encountered has vanished, and several of the preparers have indicated that the new focus on outcomes is more useful in working toward continuous improvement of their programs.

Our results indicate the committee still has not reached its final destination and has additional work ahead, including:

- continued efforts to make the process more user-friendly
- continued need to refine and improve the data collection process
- recognition of the need to update our own technology to facilitate integration of program review, institutional effectiveness, and outcomes assessment data

- ○ recognition of the need to determine whether data should be reported distinctly by campus or in aggregate by district

Conclusion

A cultural shift toward achievement and continuous improvement in results may be slow, and the journey along the way may include detours, but CAC's experience shows that it is achievable. This presentation will include information on one institution's experience with moving toward an outcomes-based approach to program review. It will include information on the Program Review Committee and its make-up, the content of the outcomes-based program review report (criteria, standards, and actions), details of the review process, and the committee's evaluation process. Copies of *The CAC Program Review Guide*, program evaluation forms, and a sample program review will be made available to attendees.

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A New Approach to Linking Academic Program Review and NCA Criterion Four

Dennis N. Nielsen
Alexander G. Yard

Introduction

To meet Criterion Four, institutions need to find ways to improve the educational programs that they offer. This requires institutions to identify program strengths, weaknesses, threats, and new opportunities so that overall institutional planning is strengthened.

Central to this effort is deployment of an effective review process that helps ensure that programs are accomplishing their intended purposes through continuous improvement. Winona State has designed and implemented a new program review model that provides academic departments with continuous feedback. It also includes a five-year quality audit and improvement plan for all academic programs.

History of Program Review at Winona State University

Until July 1, 1995, Winona State University was one of seven universities in the Minnesota State University System (MSUS). Upon that date, Winona State became part of the new merged higher education system called the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), which now oversees the community and technical colleges as well as the state universities.

Prior to the merger, Winona State reviewed programs using a four-page prescribed MSUS program review policy. The policy required campuses to write a lengthy program self-study report every five years in preparation for an external consultant site visit. The Chancellor's Office established the review schedule for all campuses and submitted summarized program reviews to the Board on an annual basis.

For the most part, academic departments produced largely anecdotal, often defensive self-studies that emphasized inputs rather than indicators of learning outcomes. Departments supplied the self-studies to external consultants who visited campus for one or two days. Consultant reports could provide departments with useful programmatic or other suggestions, which departments sometimes adopted; but the process lacked significant incentives or disincentives for use or non-use of the consultant's recommendations. Once the consultant submitted the report the program review process ended for the department.

In 1993 Winona State responded to a very critical 1993 Minnesota Legislative Auditor's report on undergraduate programs by establishing a Program Review Task Force that was composed of faculty, administrators, and students. The task force was charged to develop a program review model that would provide more internal and external program accountability.

Subsequent to merger, all MnSCU campuses were empowered to develop internal program review procedures at the campus level with no system involvement. However, the MnSCU Board did not relinquish interest in reviewing programs, but realized that the sheer size of MnSCU would preclude in-depth review. In 1995 the Board established the Strategic Comprehensive Program Enhancement (SCOPE) committee to develop a set of appropriate quantifiable criteria for the evaluation of MnSCU's more than 3000 academic programs by the Board.

Both the Legislative Auditor's Report and the MnSCU SCOPE review process alarmed the WSU Faculty Association (the local collective bargaining agent) because of their exclusive attention to quantitative measures such as short-term enrollment and graduation rates as a means of evaluating programs. Both processes seemed determined to put "high cost" and/or low enrollment programs on the "chopping block."

The Faculty Association believed that program review should focus at least as much on the quality of the educational results of programs as on the numbers of majors or graduates in any given year. Moreover, the Faculty Association realized that system-level program reviews, such as that envisioned for the SCOPE process, inevitably fail to recognize programmatic complexities that are obvious at the local level. In the SCOPE process, a course must be assigned to one and only one program, leaving it vulnerable to a system-level conclusion that it is unnecessary if it is attached to a low-enrollment program despite the likelihood that other programs require the course. The SCOPE process nevertheless provided institutions and departments an opportunity to respond with more refined quantitative and qualitative information for those programs that look suspect at the system level. Feeling somewhat defensive in the face of growing external pressures, the Faculty Association joined the administration in reconsidering the local program review process.

The WSU Faculty Association decision was also made in a context of a significant record of administration-faculty cooperation. A shared sense of mutual interest in educational quality and the institutional mission had developed in recent years as the university tackled such potentially divisive issues as establishment of a residential college, capital bonding initiatives, budget reductions, and institutional and program assessment. The administration's cooperative approach to these and other issues, the value it placed on Faculty Association input, and its respect for department autonomy, all combined to promote the perception that campus administration would not use the program review process to launch arbitrary or capricious–or politically motivated–attacks on programs. In this context, the Faculty Association helped author and endorse the final report of the Program Review Task Force in May of 1997.

Program Review Model

☐ Design Process

The task force agreed that program reviews are multipurpose and directly benefit students, academic departments, university and external stakeholders including the legislature and Board. However, if program reviews are to be meaningful and worth the effort, the review process must be well designed. The Winona State program review task force identified seven program review design goals that were used to develop the program review model.

Goal 1. The program review process should be consistent with university, MnSCU, and NCA program evaluation.

Goal 2. Academic program review should include both formative (in progress feedback) and summative evaluation (end of review cycle).

Goal 3. Academic program review should include program data elements that are readily available and useful by academic departments.

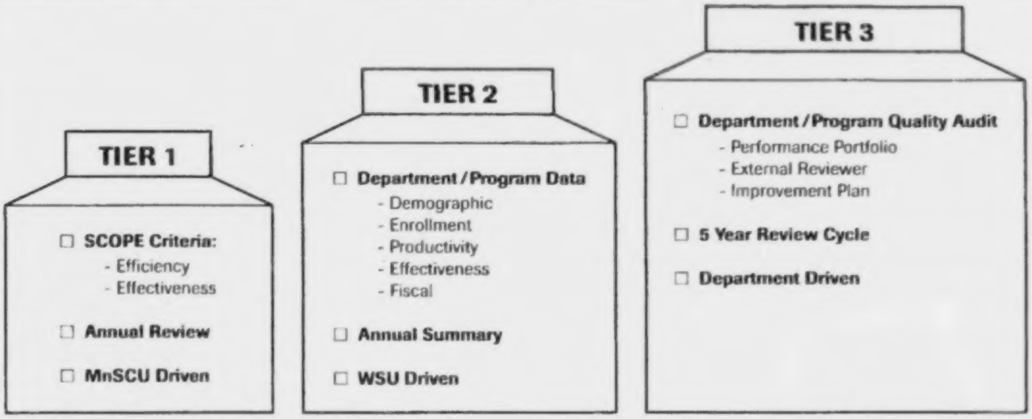
Goal 4. All programs should be subject to periodic external program evaluation.

Goal 5. Program review should be linked with department-level and institutional quality assurance and continuous quality improvement.

Goal 6. Program review should be constructive in nature by providing guidance and feedback to departments.

Goal 7. Program review should include both quantitative and qualitative assessment of program performance.

The task force reviewed many established program review models including those used by program accrediting bodies such as ABET, AACSB, and NLN. The group also reviewed NCA accreditation criteria to have a better understanding of the patterns of evidence used in support of demonstrating program effectiveness. The task force incorporated the recommendations of the SCOPE committee and decided to build on that system-wide model to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. The task force recommended a model composed of three tiers of review that meet the design criteria identified previously.


TIER 1
☐ SCOPE Criteria:
- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
☐ Annual Review
☐ MnSCU Driven
TIER 2
☐ Department / Program Data
- Demographic
- Enrollment
- Productivity
- Effectiveness
- Fiscal
☐ Annual Summary
☐ WSU Driven
TIER 3
☐ Department / Program Quality Audit
- Performance Portfolio
- External Reviewer
- Improvement Plan
☐ 5 Year Review Cycle
☐ Department Driven

[Formative Evaluations] **[Summative Evaluation]**

☐ **Tier 1 Review**

This review step is MnSCU driven and is a direct product of the SCOPE Committee. The SCOPE final report recommended that all programs be evaluated annually using six performance indicators. The six were distilled from over 200 indicators considered and represent a minimal assessment of program effectiveness and efficiency; they include:

Efficiency	1. Cost per student 2. Student: Faculty FTE ratio 3. Graduate: Faculty FTE ratio
Effectiveness	4. Graduate continuing education rates 5. Graduate employment rates 6. Graduate related employment rates (for career programs only)

The SCOPE committee recommended that all six program indicators be reported at the four-digit CIP level of detail in order to manage effectively thousands of programs annually.

☐ **Tier 2 Review**

The six performance indicators used in the Tier 1 review are not extensive enough to cover all program domains deemed necessary by Winona State to monitor program performance. The program review task force recommended adding a second level of program review that provides departments with more extensive data. Such data can be used for proactive program intervention and quality improvement. Tier 2 review is coordinated by the Office of Institutional Research and is distributed as a campus-wide report annually.

The Tier 2 review includes programmatic data for five program domains: demographics, enrollment, productivity, effectiveness, and finances. Most of the data elements are typical of the kinds of data contained in most institutional annual reports except for the program effectiveness domain.

To strengthen the qualitative dimension of program review, the task force identified effectiveness indicators that reflect good educational practice (processes). Many of them are included in the 1996 NCHEMS publication, *Indicators of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*. For example, indicators of good practice include:

Process Indicator	Associated Good Practice
Percentage of courses allowing or requiring multiple drafts, rewrites of student work	Assessment and feedback
Percentage of courses incorporating team projects or similar group experiences	Collaborative learning
Percentage of courses requiring students to use software applications	Active learning
Percentage of courses requiring student to use the library as a research base	Active learning
Percentage of majors involved in faculty research	Integrating education and practice; Student faculty contact
Percentage of courses requiring students to use electronic research skills	Active learning

☐ **Tier 3 Review**

Winona State adopted a third tier of program review that takes the form of a program quality audit every five years. Academic departments need to demonstrate effective program performance to internal stakeholders and external reviewers. Combined, Tier 2 and Tier 3 information will help departments fashion responses for programs flagged by the SCOPE process for closer scrutiny. Specific steps of the Tier 3 review include:

- ○ preparation of a program self-study report
- ○ construction of a program performance portfolio
- ○ site visit by an external reviewer and final report
- ○ preparation of a quality improvement plan

The Tier 3 review is not required for programs that are officially accredited by national program accrediting bodies, provided that an external review is part of the accreditation process.

◇ **Self-Study Report.** The program self-study report is limited to no more than 20 pages and is structured to provide evidence in support of program effectiveness. The task force recommended the following outline as a guide to the preparation of the report.

A. Introduction

  - provide brief program history
  - describe relationship with other academic units
  - provide a clear statement of changes that have occurred in response to recommendations from the last review
  - where appropriate, recommendations independent of the review

B. Curriculum

  - provide program objectives
  - provide curricular requirements
  - provide evidence that curricular quality is as strong or stronger than similar programs in the state and nation
  - provide a summary table listing the courses and the terms/sessions in which they have been offered since the last review

- provide evidence correlating the assessment of student learning outcomes to program objectives
- indicate changes made as a result of strategies employed by faculty
- indicate the complementary nature of the program with other essential programs or functions at WSU
- identify duplication of work done in the program with work done in other programs or departments
- suggest modifications to reduce duplication
- describe how teaching effectiveness is assessed
- describe cooperative efforts to ensure quality for program course requirements outside the department

C. Students

- verify current student demand and projected enrollment for the program
- verify student satisfaction with the program learning experience
- verify enrollment objectives
- verify satisfactory placement of graduates (graduate school, jobs)

D. Faculty

- verify that the faculty are qualified to teach the curriculum
- verify that the faculty have maintained an active professional development process
- provide evidence that the faculty are actively engaged in their discipline
- provide evidence that the faculty have been scholarly, including the scholarship of teaching
- verify that the program has an adequate number of qualified faculty to meet student demand
- verify that teaching loads are not excessive

E. Service

- provide evidence that the program contributes to the mission and planning priorities of WSU
- provide evidence that the program contributes important service to the community

F. Resources

- describe the adequacy of physical facilities and space assigned to the program
- verify that the program is provided adequate operating budgets for supplies, equipment, and library resources
- describe resource limitations to program growth

G. Other information not mentioned above

◇ **Performance portfolio.** The department is also responsible for assembling documentation in support of its self-study report. Materials such as course syllabi, texts, laboratory manuals, and other course-related items are made available for examination in a central location. In addition, examples of student work, such as tests, projects, assignments, and research, are also available to the consultant. This is similar to "patterns of evidence" required by NCA. Every effort is made to demonstrate student success. Examples of faculty scholarly work are also available.

◇ **External reviewer(s).** The academic department is responsible for identifying and forwarding to the dean a list of two or three potential external program review consultants. The dean, in consultation with the department, recommends approval for one or more external consultants to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Once approved, the site visit is coordinated by the dean in cooperation with the department.

The consultant(s) conduct(s) interviews with the following individuals or groups:

- department chair
- faculty members of the department
- undergraduate and graduate (if appropriate) students of the program
- dean of the college
- members of the program advisory board (if applicable)
- staff in the unit or department
- others from the University community who have some association with the program

The external consultant(s) are viewed as an external quality auditor whose main responsibility is to assess the quality of the program using evidentiary data and interviews. The consultant(s) are required to submit a written report with specific recommendations concerning the quality of the program. Issues to be addressed in the report will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- changes since the last five-year review
- proposed plans for the future
- the relation of the department with other units
- strengths and weaknesses of the program
- opportunities for improving the program within existing resources
- strengths and weaknesses of the program faculty
- strengths and weaknesses of the department's research and scholarly activity
- student satisfaction with the program
- staff and workload issues,
- adequacy of supporting services,
- student success,
- adequacy of the program assessment plan, and
- effectiveness of the program in meeting University mission and goals.

Copies of the external consultant's report are sent to the following offices: (1) department chair, (2) department faculty, (3) dean, (4) VPAA, and (5) president.

◇ **The quality improvement plan.** Once the department has received the external consultant's final report, the department is required to develop a quality improvement plan. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that feedback obtained from the consultant(s) is incorporated into programmatic planning. The department may wish to include a detailed response to the report in the plan. The quality improvement plan requires the department to identify anticipated changes to the program that faculty and students can incorporate to benefit both the program and institution. The plan is forwarded to the dean for comment early in the year following the consultant visit. The dean comments on the report directly to the department chair who has 30 calendar days to make any revisions. The final quality improvement plan is sent to the dean with a copy to the VPAA.

Summary

The academic program review model implemented by Winona State includes both formative and summative performance evaluation. The model builds on the review model implemented for all colleges and universities in the MnSCU System by expanding the performance indicator base to include extensive effectiveness and efficiency measures. The performance data are used by departments annually for continuous improvement purposes. The process takes place in a context of shared administration-faculty interest in educational quality and mutual trust, which permits faculty to concentrate on program enhancement and not self-defense.

Summative evaluations occur every five years when academic programs are subject to a quality audit by an external reviewer. Departments are required to prepare a performance portfolio prior to the audit and must also complete a quality improvement plan following the audit. The net result is better program planning and quality assurance.

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Making Curricular Decisions from Program Evaluations

William E. Roweton

One primary purpose for program assessment is to make data-informed decisions. Effective decisions through, for example, the collection, analyses, and interpretation of student-achievement data, can improve program instructional quality.

Decisions based on performance data present several significant challenges, especially for those not accustomed to the jargon and quantitative-intrigue of program evaluations. The initial challenge yields an assessment design, that is, a realistic methodology utilizing reliable and valid performance protocols and psychometric procedures. Typically, effective designs meld textbook wisdom with practical savvy. Of course, much more follows.

The second challenge, intertwined inevitably with the first, asks both seasoned and rookie program evaluators to make data-enlightened instructional decisions from their "numbers." Obviously, professional judgment mediates.

Are there models, rules, or street-wisdom to move from numbers to the qualitative world of curricular decisions? Fortunately, decades of research literature on complex group problem-solving and statistically-oriented decision-making exist.

Incorporating research literature, this presentation will navigate the seemingly uncharted waters connecting assessment data and program decisions. Discussion will begin with several fundamental assumptions. First, we will assume that quantification alone, in spite of its scientistic appearance, does not make curricular decisions; rather, professionals in academic instructional units make sense of otherwise meaningless data to decide whether, for example, particular courses are eliminated, replaced, or revitalized. Successful institutional program decision-making is as much about people *collectively* unraveling complex puzzles as about statistics; in short, the idiosyncratic strengths of *both* people *and* statistics must be marshaled advantageously.

☐ Strategy

This session asks for participation. First, small groups of audience volunteers will be organized into instructional "units" to review an annual program-assessment report. This simulation underscores key group-dynamics. Second, a two-page assessment report, complete with descriptive statistics and graphics, will be distributed. Third, based on their reading, each unit will make one programmatic recommendation. In our follow-up discussion, divergence in problem-solving strategies and unit recommendations will be sampled and, then, key research-findings about decision-making will be briefly reviewed.

☐ Models

The relative merits of both [1] weighted-additive models and [2] process methods of decision making will be compared. Weighted-additive models (e.g., Lens; Fishbein), sometimes called input-output or regression models, lend themselves to correlational statistics, now commonplace in program assessments. Of course, selecting weighted-attributes for our linear equation reaches into the minds and hearts of professionals who understand the instructional and training processes well. What begins as a complex statistical puzzle evolves, ideally, into a searching, professional dialogue. Fortunately, process methods (e.g., verbal protocols; search methods) can reveal motivations and perceptions effectively.

Combining weighted-additive and process methods provides both needed perspectives. Mixing decision-making approaches, it will be argued, considers both people and statistics in program decision-making.

Conclusion

As Carroll and Johnson (1990) noted, "[d]ecision makers frequently are unable to articulate their underlying decision process[es]..." (p. 31).

Should not all phases of assessment-based, decision-making be conceptually and statistically articulated? Only when program evaluators are as interested in the perspectives of program stakeholders as they are with numbers will assessment yield all of its potential benefits.

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Carroll, J. S. and E. J. Johnson. 1990. *Decision research: A field guide.* Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications.

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Chapter 8

NCA

Case Studies in Collaboration:

General Education / Critical Thinking

THE Collaborative Imperative

103rd Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
March 28-31, 1998 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

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The Collaboration of Academic and Student Affairs: What Evidence Exists to Prove that Critical Thinking is Actually Taught and Assessed in the Total Undergraduate Experience?

Sonia S. Cowen
Penny Poplin Gosetti

Within the past decade, the assessment of undergraduates' preparation for and achievement in college has progressed beyond proficiency in writing, mathematics, and reading. Choose a current catalog of any postsecondary institution, and examine the section referring to the content, competencies, skills, and values intended to be taught and achieved by all students as a consequence of having enrolled in and completed their undergraduate studies. Some will state the need for undergraduates to attain and develop a general knowledge of and intellectual capacities in "community," or "scientific inquiry," or "information literacy," or "creative expression," or "historic consciousness and social awareness." Some will state the need for developing and recognizing ethical modes of thinking and acting. Most state the need for students to become "critical thinkers."

Statements of intent, however, are not necessarily evidence of practice and outcomes. Taube (1997), for instance, claimed that academe fails to define "critical thinking" in either universal or discipline-specific and measurable terms that might be applied uniformly by faculty. If postsecondary institutions are not defining critical thinking, then it is questionable whether or not they are identifying where, when, how, and why "critical thinking" is or should be taught in specific courses comprising the undergraduate curriculum, and whether or not they are identifying how the students' achievements and performance of "critical thinking" would be assessed summatively–either at the conclusion of completing the general university requirements, or at the conclusion of their undergraduate studies.

Without evidence of or reference to stated definitions, expectations, or specific "critical thinking" learning goals ascribed uniformly to specific university courses or extracurricular experiences, we wonder if the standards and measures against which students' learning and practice of "critical thinking" are left rather chaotically to chance that students will enroll in at least one course, or participate in at least one extra-curricular experience, in which an educator understands, appreciates, and is willing to teach "critical thinking." This is especially critical when course-taking pattern and extra-curricular involvement are largely elective or loosely monitored. Thus, if the student was not prepared as a "critical thinker" in at least one of the general university courses or experiences, is it not a disservice to assess the student later in his or her academic tenure for the acquisition and application of learning the university may not have imparted?

This paper addresses these issues through the examination of the definitions, course lessons, and the assessment of learning related specifically to the instruction and reinforcement of critical thinking in the total undergraduate experience. It reports the findings of a study that sought evidence of collaborative efforts between student affairs and academic affairs in defining, identifying, communicating, teaching, and assessing their undergraduates' acquisition of critical thinking competencies both inside and outside the classroom.

Critical Thinking as an Outcome of the Total Undergraduate Experience

A student's acquisition of competencies in critical thinking enhances a graduate's ability to succeed as a worker, as a family member, as a contributing member of a larger community, and as a lifelong learner both during and after college. Academe's responsibility for including critical thinking as a learned and assessed outcome of the undergraduate experience has gained favor in the literature (for example, see Dressel & Mayhew 1954; Ennis 1991; Kurfiss 1988; and Siegel 1988 for identification of critical thinking as an intended outcome of higher education; see Taube, 1997 for identification of a critical thinking disposition as an intended outcome of general education in postsecondary institutions; and see Astin, 1993; Pascarella et al. 1996; and Terenzini Springer, Pascarella, and Nora, as cited in Pascarella et al. 1996, for the identification of the relationship between critical thinking and student change and development, and the influences of out-of-class experiences relative to cognitive development). An unprecedented agreement exists among many academicians, legislators, and the public regarding the *need* for critical thinking to be taught and performed at the undergraduate level (Dressel & Mayhew 1954; Ennis 1991), yet *no agreement* exists upon one "universally accepted definition of critical thinking" (Taube 1997, p. 130).

The debate regarding a "universal" definition has lasted nearly 40 years. In 1962, Ennis offered a definition of critical thinking as "the correct" assessment of facts or "statements" (p. 83); nearly 35 years later, Scriven and Paul (1997), on behalf of the National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking, defined critical thinking as

> the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication as a guide to belief and action . . . based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness (p. 1).

In addition to the question of a universal definition of critical thinking, Kurfiss (1988) found three primary perspectives that "dominate current literature on critical thinking and its development in college: argument skills, cognitive processes, and intellectual development" (p. iii).

Although the literature may offer varied definitions and perspectives of critical thinking, Taube (1997) concluded that "there is considerable agreement regarding the skills which represent critical thinking ability" (p. 131), and offered the following evidence:

> These skills focus on the evaluation of the premises, evidence, and conclusions included in an argument. Dick (1991) suggested a taxonomy of 15 critical thinking skills organized into five categories: identifying arguments, analyzing arguments, external sources, scientific analytical reasoning, and reasoning and logic. Ennis (1962) outlined 12 key critical thinking skills, while Browne, Hass, and Keeley (1978) identified a similar set of eight critical thinking skills (p. 131).

Although the national agenda for improvements in education calls for an ongoing assessment of student outcomes performance at the undergraduate level (i.e., as expressed through the *Goals 2000: The Educate America Act* offered by the U.S. Department of Education in 1990, the North Central Association's Criterion Three, and the Student Learning Imperative), it is not enough for students to learn and apply critical thinking in the classroom alone. Rather, the research suggests the out-of-class experience may be more important to the learning and practice of critical thinking than in-class experiences (Pascarella et al. 1996).

These findings may well challenge our most traditional notion of where "critical thinking" should be taught and practiced. If, as the literature over the past 40 years indicates, critical thinking has been an expected outcome of classroom instruction at the undergraduate level, then the research offered by Pascarella and others demonstrates the need to infuse the teaching and assessment of critical thinking as an expected outcome of *both in-the-classroom* and *out-of-the-classroom experiences.* Thus, critical thinking would become an intended outcome of an undergraduate experience that encompasses both cognitive and affective dimensions. The quality of the undergraduate experience, if designed and delivered collaboratively, by the academic and student services personnel, with an emphasis on critical thinking instruction and practice, may well meet the principles outlined in the 1994 Student Learning Imperative (SLI)—a project sponsored by the American College Personnel Association, and developed by a group of higher education leaders who examined how student learning and personal development could be enhanced by student affairs personnel.

While the SLI does not specifically emphasize cognitive development as a role of student affairs personnel, recent literature on the utility of the SLI focuses upon the areas of cognition and critical thinking (Baxter Magolda 1992; Pascarella et al. 1996). Thus, the study of the *best* means for students to learn and practice critical thinking becomes a common question for both faculty and student services personnel—and the importance of collaborative efforts between academic and student affairs in teaching and reinforcing the learning of critical thinking and other cognitive skills at the undergraduate level becomes tantamount to the need to expand the dimensions of current research regarding the presence of institutional blending of the cognitive and affective domains in critical thinking as a goal of the seamless learning environment described in the SLI.

Such revelations and actions are futile, however, if evidence does not exist to demonstrate that critical thinking is actually being taught in the classroom, outside the classroom, and/or across both domains. For despite the research that offers varied definitions and characteristics of critical thinking, and evidence of higher education's efforts to integrate and assess critical thinking as a learned skill inside and outside the classroom, academe must still address–or refute with compelling evidence to the contrary–DeNitto and Strickland's (1987) and Halpern's (1989) findings that few inside and outside academe believe that critical thinking skills are actually being taught.

The Purpose and Findings of the Pilot Study

These issues led us to conduct a pilot study to determine if evidence exists that critical thinking as a competency is actually identified, defined, communicated, taught, and assessed as a measurable outcome of the undergraduate curricula for students enrolled at postsecondary institutions of the Mid-America Conference. The findings of the pilot study indicated that many institutions were attempting to teach and assess critical thinking as a competency without ever defining it, and without identifying, in many cases, where it was actually taught. Some specific findings are described below, and summarized in the accompanying table (Appendix A).

- All responding institutions identified general education requirements for undergraduates. (All responding institutions, except one, listed their general education requirements in their catalog/s.)
- Sixty percent of the institutions assess critical thinking but some of those institutions offer no evidence to demonstrate that they have either defined or provided criteria for teaching and assessing the learning or mastery of critical thinking.
- Some institutions state learning objectives and goals with respect to the undergraduates' acquisition of critical learning but only 30% identify critical thinking as a specific outcome of either the general education or specific majors.
- Few institutional publications define critical thinking as an ability or competency in either universal or discipline-specific and measurable terms and identify where, when, how, and why critical thinking is taught at the undergraduate level.
- No institutions require the acquisition and demonstration of critical thinking abilities or competencies as prerequisites for admission to specific majors.
- Although not always tied to a clear definition of critical thinking or standards for measurement, two institutions have summative evaluations and two institutions are evolving towards formative evaluations.

These findings raised the concern that perhaps all the assistance the North Central Association had provided postsecondary institutions in developing their assessment plans at the undergraduate level had failed to influence the MAC institutions' creation and adaptation of workable and understood definitions of student performance outcomes, such as critical thinking. From the findings of the study, it is clear that specific issues related to the development of the institutions' assessment plans include:

- If course-taking pattern is largely elective or loosely monitored at the undergraduate level, and if the standards and measures against which students learn and practice critical thinking are undefined and not prescribed to specific courses, then it is left to chance that students will enroll in courses that provide instruction in critical thinking.
- If the student was not taught specifically to be a critical thinker in at least one required undergraduate course, it is a fallacy to believe that an institution can adequately and accurately assess the university's role in positively influencing the student's academic progress and performance as a critical thinker as a consequence of completing the institution's undergraduate studies.
- If the institution fails to assess the student's ability as a critical thinker prior to the undergraduate experience, and only assesses the student's ability during or at the conclusion of the undergraduate experience, the institution cannot conclude that it, in fact, solely imparted critical thinking as a learned outcome of the undergraduate experience.

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If we know from the research that gains in critical thinking are greater from out-of-class experiences than they are from in-class experiences (Pascarella et al. 1996), and if we know, as our pilot study indicates, that institutions are identifying critical thinking as a competency to be acquired through the undergraduate curricula, and if, as the Student Learning Imperative suggests, there should be collaboration between academic and student affairs in the cognitive and affective development of the undergraduate student, it then seems necessary to explore whether critical thinking is defined, identified, communicated, taught, and assessed in *both* the academic and student services environs—and if so, does a purposeful collaborative effort exist between the two areas?

The Purpose of the Broadened Study

To answer these questions, we returned to the MAC institutions that participated in the pilot study to determine if evidence exists that critical thinking as a competency is defined, identified, communicated, taught, and assessed as a measurable outcome of the entire undergraduate experience—both curricular and extra-curricular. Specifically, we investigated if the participating institutions:

- **Define** critical thinking, both within the general university curriculum and extra-curriculum, as a competency and standard for graduation at the undergraduate level.
- **Identify** and **communicate** where, when, how, and why critical thinking is taught and assessed for undergraduates within the general university core and the extra-curriculum.
- Can **provide evidence** that all students have satisfactorily acquired and demonstrated their competencies as critical thinkers as a consequence of having completed their undergraduate experience.

We acknowledge that the findings from the pilot study presented in this paper and the broadened study—the results of which will be distributed at the NCA Annual Meeting in March 1998—are based on a small number of institutions associated with the North Central Association, and for the findings to be useful in their application to the Association as a whole, it will be necessary, in a future study, to increase the number of postsecondary institutions examined.

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Appendix A

	Self Reported "Yes"	Self Reported "No"	No Response	Comments
General education requirement for bachelors	100%	–	–	
General education requirements listed in catalog	90%	10%	–	
Critical thinking listed as specific competency/skill to acquire or demonstrate	70%	30%	–	
Critical thinking listed in institutional publications as expected outcome	80%	10%	10%	Most common publications listed: catalog (6); committee minutes (5); university assessment plan (5); mission statement (3)
Critical thinking specifically defined by institution	50%	40%	10%	
Critical thinking defined uniformly	30%	30%	40%	
Standards used to measure critical thinking	30%	20%	50%	
Standards applied uniformly to all courses	20%	–	80%	
Student must demonstrate competency	30%	30%	40%	
Student must demonstrate competency for admittance to major	–	30%	70%	
Must demonstrate competency for graduation	10%	30%	60%	
Requirement is enforced	20%	–	80%	
Identify methodologies of assessment	60%	–	40%	Most common methodologies listed: embedded testing or assigned application within designated courses external reviews or exams of a student's ability to demonstrate critical thinking competencies outside the classroom (3)
Courses identified as key to teaching critical thinking	20%	50%	30%	

Figure 1.

Pilot Survey Regarding Evidence of Critical Thinking in Selected Postsecondary Institutions' General University Requirements Curricula: Fall 1997 (N=10)

The Institutional Portfolio: A Performance-Based Model for Assessment of General Education

Jeffrey A. Seybert
Kathleen A. O'Hara

Institutional Profile

Johnson County Community College (JCCC) is a comprehensive, single campus, suburban community college located in Overland Park, Kansas, in the Kansas City, Missouri, metropolitan area. The college was founded in 1969 and occupied its present 240 acre campus in 1972. JCCC enrolls approximately 15,500 credit students and serves an additional 16,000 individuals in noncredit, continuing education programs, courses, workshops, and other events per semester. The college offers a full range of general education/ transfer preparation, career/occupational, and developmental courses as well as a wide array of student and support services to meet the diverse needs of its students.

The impetus for assessment of student learning outcomes at Johnson County Community College has come from several sources. One, of course, is the North Central Association requirement that institutions of higher education prepare and implement a student academic achievement assessment plan. In addition, for some time, JCCC has had a strong interest in and has conducted several pilot projects assessing student cognitive/ learning outcomes. For example, the college participated in an early ACT research project involving the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) test. Although the CAAP results indicated that JCCC students performed at or above national averages in several areas, the college was not satisfied with the methodological logistics of CAAP; and some members of the faculty had serious reservations regarding the match between some CAAP modules and the JCCC curriculum in those areas. The decision was made, therefore, to investigate more feasible, less intrusive, assessment strategies that would also be more relevant to the general education outcomes identified by JCCC faculty. The results of that process culminated in the assessment strategies detailed in this paper.

In addition, JCCC has a long history of comprehensive institutional research and evaluation and of using data to support planning and programmatic improvement. For example, for several years Johnson County Community College has had in place a comprehensive model to assess institutional effectiveness, several components of which either directly or indirectly evaluate student learning outcomes. They are: career student follow-up surveys conducted one and four years after career program students complete a program (i.e., earn a degree or certificate) or leave with "marketable skills"; an annual employer survey; a transfer follow-up process that includes an annual survey and receipt and analysis of academic data from senior institutions regarding the academic progress of former JCCC students who have transferred; an educational objectives survey of students who leave the institution without graduating, completing a program, or transferring; a course evaluation process (IDEA) in which students' perceptions of their progress on major course learning objectives, as identified by faculty, are collected and analyzed; and a comprehensive analysis, on a semester basis, of grading distributions and patterns, course and program attrition rates, and reasons students drop courses.

Description of the Model

Johnson County Community College's assessment of general education involves collecting and reviewing existing student work produced in courses throughout the curriculum for each of four major outcomes identified in the college catalog: mathematics, communication, culture and ethics, and modes of inquiry and problem solving. This review is conducted by interdisciplinary faculty teams using holistic scoring criteria (rubrics) for each of the stated student academic general education outcomes. The results are reported in the aggregate and may also be analyzed and reported based on several other demographic variables (e.g., credit hours earned, prior courses completed, etc.). Each department addresses assessment results in its annual master planning document. The Dean of Instruction, with support from the college's faculty curriculum committee (the Educational Affairs Committee), is ultimately responsible for ensuring that appropriate curricular changes are made throughout the institution based on assessment results.

Philosophy

The development of JCCC's general education assessment model was initiated in early fall 1992 when the Dean of Instruction asked the faculty curriculum committee (Educational Affairs) to take responsibility for this task. Although the immediate impetus for this request was the North Central Association's Criterion Three, from the very beginning of the process the faculty and the dean agreed that outcomes assessment at JCCC would go beyond fulfilling an external mandate. The philosophy of the committee was (and is) that assessment of student outcomes should yield meaningful data from which decisions about curricular improvement can be made. In addition, the committee believed strongly that the purpose of assessment should be evaluation and improvement of the general education curriculum rather than evaluation of individual faculty. With this basic philosophy in place, the task of developing the assessment model was assigned to the General Education/Assessment Subcommittee of the Educational Affairs Committee.

This subcommittee added to this basic philosophy the belief that as many faculty as possible should be included in the assessment development process, either directly or indirectly. Thus, the subcommittee was expanded to include a wider representation of faculty. While a few members have changed throughout the process, the core of the subcommittee has remained intact.

Development of the Model

The development of the model to assess general education was a slow but steady and thorough process. This process proceeded as follows:

- ◇ **1992-93 academic year.** The subcommittee spent essentially the entire year studying and discussing assessment. Members read numerous books, journal articles, and NCA publications. They also talked with colleagues from other institutions and attended conferences and workshops. In addition, members reviewed current assessment procedures already in place at JCCC. By the end of the year, a conceptual framework of general education assessment was formulated and distributed to faculty for feedback.

- ◇ **1993-94 academic year.** The subcommittee determined that the reference to general education in the college catalog should be the basis for general education outcomes statements since the catalog is the college's formal medium for communication with students (i.e., academic requirements, standards, policies, and procedures). The members divided into four sub-subcommittees, each charged with operationally defining a specific component of the statement. By the end of the first semester, the groups had drafted outcomes statements that were presented to the faculty at large for feedback. This feedback was incorporated into the statement, and by April 1994 the subcommittee turned its attention to assessment of these outcomes. Members continued their study of assessment methodologies and concluded that the idea of "performance-based" assessment was in keeping with their stated goal of assessment's yielding meaningful data upon which to base curricular improvement. Thus, they began to explore ways to compile collections of existing student work in each of the four areas of general education outcomes. By the end of the semester, the rudiments of this idea were formulated, presented to, and approved by the Educational Affairs Committee. (See Assessment Plan Logistics.)

- ◇ **1994-95 academic year.** The subcommittee members spent this time developing holistic scoring criteria (rubrics) and standards for the outcomes. These rubrics and the scoring process were pilot-tested on student assignments. The outcomes statements and rubrics were then clarified and revised. The subcommittee as a whole discussed the logistics of implementing the plan (see Assessment Plan Logistics) and proposed a larger pilot project for the 1995-96 academic year. A memo was sent to all teaching faculty asking for volunteers to participate in the pilot. Some forty faculty members responded. An orientation session was held at the end of the spring semester to explain the process and answer any questions.

- ◇ **1995-96 academic year.** Institutional pilot test of the model.

- ◇ **1996-97 academic year.** Initial implementation of the model.

Assessment Plan Logistics

Who scores...	Three to four person interdisciplinary faculty teams score student artifacts using the rubrics developed. These teams are comprised of General Education/Assessment Subcommittee members.
How Scored...	Team members score artifacts individually, with subsequent group meetings (if necessary); however, a team may elect to score as a group.
How Many Artifacts...	One hundred artifacts per outcome (that is, 100 for Math; 100 for each of the Communications areas: Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening; 100 for Modes of Inquiry and Problem Solving; and 100 for Culture and Ethics) per year are collected. These are divided into 50 per semester, collected whenever available, usually late in the semester.
When Scored...	Fall semester artifacts are scored throughout the spring semester; spring semester artifacts are scored during the subsequent fall semester, and so on.
Who Selects Courses...	The Office of Institutional Research randomly selects courses from lists associated with each of the outcomes. Ten classes per outcome are targeted each semester.
Who Selects Artifacts...	Faculty in each targeted class identify an appropriate assignment and collect the corresponding student work. Office of Institutional Research collects that artifact from the entire section, randomly sampling and copying 10 from each class for scoring by the faculty team.
Who Collects, Copies, Distributes, Artifacts...	Staff in the Office of Institutional Research.
How Results Are Used...	Upon receiving scored artifacts back from faculty teams, the Office of Institutional Research compiles results and prepares a report to be distributed to faculty. The subcommittee reviews the report and raises issues for faculty to discuss. Action taken by faculty as a result of these discussions is included in the annual departmental master plans. The Dean of Instruction is responsible for ensuring that results of assessment are addressed in departmental and divisional master planning and budgeting processes.
Budget...	Compensation for faculty and staff who score student artifacts requires approximately $15,000 annually. An additional $15,000 was budgeted to provide the required technical support in the Office of Institutional Research.
Assessment of the Assessment Plan...	Toward the end of the spring semester in each academic year, the subcommittee reviews the entire assessment process during a regularly scheduled meeting. The Office of Institutional Research assists in this review, which may involve a survey of faculty regarding the efficacy of the assessment process. Any recommendations are documented in the subcommittee's year-end report.

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NCA and the University: Collaborative Support for Strengthening General Education

Sandra M. Singer
Carol B. Gartner

Introduction

Faculty members of colleges and universities may argue vehemently about general education programs—their nature, their extent, their composition—but very few would maintain that general education should not exist. Some, humanists perhaps the majority, believe that it is the heart of a college education, the part that endures lifelong and prepares us for the vicissitudes of career changes and the appreciation of life outside and eventually after work. Some, at the opposite end of the spectrum, suffer it as the necessary but limited base that supplies the skills without which the major, or the practical part of education, cannot be successful. Even these distant colleagues, however, would agree that among all the organizations "out there" that accredit institutions and programs, none looks out specifically for general education.

The specialized, discipline-based accrediting associations reflect the views of faculty members and professionals in their respective fields. Most acknowledge the importance of a general education base for the professional education component, and in some cases establish minimum requirements. However, their primary mission and focus is on the specific courses that comprise a targeted discipline-specific curriculum.

There are organizations that support the concept of *liberal* education, but these, of course, are not accrediting agencies. They are associations of individuals who share a philosophical base. Important as they are in supplying these individuals with a community of supportive colleagues and a platform for generalized influence, they lack the power of accrediting agencies with their possibilities for negative sanctions and positive imprimatur, sometimes controlling licensing or credentialing of students, programs, and institutions. Unlike the proponents of professional or vocational education, then, the supporters of general education for its own inherent values, rather than its service values, have no organized, powerful base. This may help prevent adoption of adequate general education programs in some institutions, and allow erosion of the effectiveness of such programs in others.

The Role of the North Central Association

Regional accrediting associations like the North Central Association's Commission on Institutions of Higher Education are the only organizations that accredit entire institutions of higher education. Therefore, they are in a unique position to advocate the importance of general education, and act *formally*, as part of the review process, to ensure the adequacy and the effectiveness of general education programs within member universities and colleges.

The NCA includes a General Institutional Requirement (GIR) (#16) attesting to the need for a general education requirement: The institution's "undergraduate degree programs include a coherent general education requirement consistent with the institution's mission and designed to ensure breadth of knowledge and to promote intellectual inquiry." It is perhaps significant that this GIR follows three GIRs pertaining to degree programs. Nonetheless, the explication of GIR 16 presents a strong statement defining general education, in place since 1983, which culminates with the statement that "it is intended to impart common knowledge, intellectual concepts, and attitudes that every educated person should possess" (NCA 1997, 23). This statement is followed by a rigorous specific list of descriptors pertaining to general education for the evaluation team to investigate and validate (24). The Criteria for Accreditation further reinforce the role and importance of general education. Discussion of Criterion Three, "The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes," notes that "Higher education does more than train or certify skills, the goals of many excellent postsecondary institutions. Higher education requires students not only to master a rigorous body of knowledge, but also to conceptualize, analyze, and integrate" (41). The section on "The Role of General Education in This Criterion" (45-46) carefully elaborates the ways an institution can fulfill these goals consistent with its own particular mission.

A Need for Change

Our proposal that the NCA collaborate with its member colleges and universities in strengthening general education has strong support in the written materials of the *Handbook of Accreditation*, specifically in GIR 16 and the discussion of Criterion Three. In practice, however, the application of these materials and their role in the determinations of the evaluation team and the succeeding levels of the accreditation process vary according to the interests and values of the individuals involved. It is thus inconsistent and voluntary, at times even accidental. We propose that general education become a formal and targeted initiative, just as assessment has been. As a result of the NCA concentration on assessment, that activity has become essential and meaningful on most campuses, and clearly important in the accreditation process. General education needs the same concentration and impetus, so that it too is given a primary focus in the accreditation process, and therefore, in the universities. Then there will be an accreditation association "out there" to support meaningful and effective general education consistent with an institution's mission.

An Illustrative Example

That such NCA scrutiny, evaluation, and above all, authority can have a powerful positive effect in the area of general education is clear from the experience of Purdue University Calumet (PUC). Much of the impetus for this paper comes from our recent experience in responding to a concern raised at our most recent NCA comprehensive evaluation in 1993. While PUC was granted continued accreditation with the next comprehensive evaluation scheduled in ten years, the evaluation team recommended a focused visit for 1995-96, in part, so our progress toward developing a general education program could be reviewed. The NCA team that visited PUC in 1993 remarked in its report that, although each degree program had its own set of general education requirements, the evaluation team was, "not convinced that the institution has a general education program that reflects a common institutional philosophy, hence, it lacks coherence, rationale and consistency."

This action could have been interpreted as intrusive; but, if truth be told, even prior to the 1993 NCA visit, many faculty and academic administrators had already acknowledged the need for greater coherency among the general education requirements of the various academic programs. In fact, the issue was noted in the self-study that the institution prepared before the 1993 NCA accreditation visit; and by the time of that visit, a task force had been studying the issue for more than a year. The task force had done an admirable job of developing a philosophy in keeping with the University's mission and a set of general education objectives. However, the next step, that of defining a set of course requirements, had not been accomplished by 1993. It was toward that end that the accrediting team recommended a focused visit for purposes of evaluating progress. This visit was scheduled for spring of 1996.

Following their visit, the 1996 team reported that PUC had continued to make progress; but because the set of course requirements approved by the Council of Faculty Delegates between the 1993 and 1996 visits was subsequently reconsidered and ultimately defeated, our goal had not been met. The 1996 report—both constructive and fair—was quite insistent that we "get on with it." It specified an expected completion date of one calendar year following the visit (June 1997).

While some members of the faculty and staff perceived this as overcontrolling, many others saw the wisdom in the evaluation team's attempt to move to closure a process that would inevitably result in compromise and thus could have dragged on interminably. We are pleased to report that, in this case, the deadline did provide an incentive to develop a set of core courses, approved by the appropriate faculty bodies. In retrospect, this particular group of NCA evaluators were most helpful to the process as they were able to draw upon their collective experience with and knowledge of good general education programs. PUC now has a university-wide general education core in place, and faculty are currently in the process of developing methods of assessing its value to our students. It is probably not the "perfect" core and it will surely be revised and, it is hoped, improved. But, in the meantime, our students are being exposed to a set of basic skills and general knowledge that we hope will enhance their ability to live wisely.

What NCA Can Do

Institutions like PUC can gain a great deal from strong NCA activities in the area of general education. PUC has made the first steps toward a university-wide shared philosophy and requirements. When the NCA visits again in 2003, it can play an important role in stimulating serious examination of the general education program's adequacy and effectiveness, and ensuring that other pressures have not produced slippage in enthusiasm, support, and monitoring. Just as the NCA has helped bring our institution this far, it may help motivate us to improve and strengthen in appropriate ways our general education program in the next round of accreditation.

We suggest a sampling of specific questions and topics for investigation that might be built into the self-study and the NCA team's evaluation process: First, can the school demonstrate that the general education program in place is consistent with its mission? That should stimulate consideration of how the often broad statements of a mission have been translated into actuality. Second, do the requirements elaborated in the program meet the demands of its own statement of philosophy? Third, does the university community, faculty, students, and staff alike, understand the nature and importance of the general education program? More specifically, can faculty articulate why they are teaching these courses, and students, why they are taking them, beyond the oft-repeated "I'm taking this course because it's required." Fourth, is there adequate support, both financial and personal, for the general education program to run smoothly and efficiently and accomplish its purposes? Does it, for example, have sufficient administrative support to evaluate whether specific courses are indeed fulfilling the stated goals of the program? Fifth, is there effective evaluation not only of student outcomes in individual courses but of student outcomes in the broader program? And sixth, what provisions are there to ensure that transfer students have equivalent opportunities to accrue this valuable knowledge?

We return to our original question: Among all the accreditation agencies out there, who supports general education? Should it be the NCA? We believe the NCA and its colleague regional associations, as the only general accreditation organizations, must try to balance the pressures of the disciplinary accreditation agencies. They must become the special overseers and voice for general education in cooperation with on-campus supporters. Every institution can benefit from both permission and insistence to support a meaningful general education program that fulfills it's individual mandate.

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Assessing Writing and Critical Thinking Skills Using a Rubric Applied to General Education Program Portfolio Entries

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Introduction

The initial goals of the Shawnee State University (SSU) Assessment Committee were drawn directly from the University's Mission Statement. The goals included measuring institutional effectiveness in the following areas:

1. students who graduate from SSU will be able to *communicate orally* in a clear, concise manner
2. students who graduate from SSU will be able to *communicate in writing* in a clear, concise manner
3. students who graduate from SSU will compare favorably in their ability to *reason scientifically* with those students completing degrees from similar institutions nationally
4. students who graduate from SSU will compare favorably in their ability to *reason quantitatively* with those students completing degrees from similar institutions nationally
5. students who graduate from SSU will compare favorably in their ability to *apply critical analysis and logical thinking* with those students completing degrees from similar institutions nationally

Several methods are being used to assess these goals, including the *Academic Profile*, evaluation of oral presentations given in a capstone senior seminar course, and evaluation of writing and critical thinking skills using materials gathered in a portfolio project. The information presented here relates to the portfolio project.

Development of the Portfolio Project

One measure used to assess the General Education Program at Shawnee State University is a longitudinal Portfolio Project. Writing samples are collected from all students in a freshman composition course and a capstone senior seminar. In addition, in a sample of 150 students each year, writing assignments are collected from every General Education course they take from the freshman through the senior level.

A faculty committee met frequently during 1994 to develop methods for assessing the writing samples with respect to writing skills and critical thinking ability. The faculty reading, discussion, and draft methodologies led to the development of three rubrics for scoring the writing samples. One of two rubrics is applied to evaluate the writing skills of the student. The first rubric is designed for research-based writing that requires formal documentation and the second is intended for other types of writing (creative works, lab reports, responses to essay exam questions, etc.) Both rubrics include an evaluation of structure, content and mechanics. The third rubric assesses eight dimensions of the students' critical reasoning ability. The critical thinking rubric relies on ideas in a short article by Michael Scriven and Richard Paul, "Defining Critical Thinking–A draft statement for the National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking Instruction" (Scriven and Paul 1997).

The three rubrics have been in a constant process of revision as they have been used to evaluate student writing samples. Each time the rubrics are used with a new scoring team, we spend some time discussing how well the rubric works and how it could be improved. The discussion about the structure and content of the rubric has been a valuable professional development tool to raise the collective consciousness of the SSU faculty about what constitutes good writing and solid critical thinking. The most current version (January 1998) of the three rubrics is included as an appendix to this paper.

Using the Results for Institutional Improvement

A pilot project using the rubrics to assess writing samples was done in 1996. Writing samples from the freshman composition and research GEP course were analyzed. The results were examined to see if there was a difference between students taking the course with full-time faculty and adjunct faculty. A concern expressed by an NCA focused visit team in 1994 was the high reliance on adjunct faculty in freshman composition sequence. While the average rubric scores on papers from courses taught by full-time faculty were slightly higher than those papers from course taught by adjunct faculty, the difference was not statistically significant.

Two findings from the pilot project have led to suggested changes and action at SSU. First, while the writing quality did not seem to vary from full-time to adjunct courses, the grades given to the students were significantly different. The average course grade awarded by full-time faculty for the students whose papers were read was 2.5, approximately a C+. Adjunct faculty grades were much higher, an average of 3.2. This led to the recommendation that adjunct faculty in the composition program be more involved in course planning, professional development opportunities, and GEP Assessment. Second, Engl 112S, Composition and Research, is described in the SSU Catalog as "an introduction to the relationship between research and composition." The final paper in the course is supposed to be argumentative in nature. The writing assignment for the students suggests that they take a position on an issue and then defend that position with documentation referenced in their paper. It was clear to the seven faculty who used the rubric to score papers during the pilot project that this goal was not being met. The large majority of the papers were summaries of information about a topic, much like an encyclopedia entry. Students were not taking a position and arguing for their stance on the topic they selected to investigate. Discussion about standardizing the writing prompt for the final paper in the course has occurred. In addition, a discussion has begun about the expectations for the course and how to link the course to improved writing.

Lessons Learned

The experience of the portfolio project at Shawnee State University has provided a number of insights we can share.

- There is value in involving faculty in the assessment planning process. Having the faculty actually develop the scoring rubrics assures that the assessment is in line with the goals and objectives of the courses being assessed. This value is lost when an outside instrument is adopted or a standardized test is used. Faculty involvement also leads to greater faculty ownership and acceptance of the assessment efforts.

- Information gained from an alternative form of assessment, such as using rubrics to evaluate writing samples from a student portfolio, can lead to unexpected discoveries. The two findings from the preceding section are examples of valuable information gleaned from the assessment process.

- Any assessment process must be continually reevaluated, modified, and improved. For instance, we began using too small a sample size for the portfolio project because of the number of students leaving the institution at various points in their college experience.

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Appendix A. Writing Skills Rubric

Writing Skills Rubric

	Structure	Content	Mechanics
5 *superior*	Clear beginning, development, and conclusion Appropriate paragraphing Clear and appropriate transitions	Appropriate length to cover topic Clearly and coherently focused (including a good sense of audience) Thoughts clearly organized and presented Logical and clear progression Assertions clearly supported and/or illustrated	Correct sentence structure Correct spelling Correct punctuation Correct capitalization Correct usage Appropriate word choice
4 *very good*	Generally clear beginning, development, and conclusion Generally appropriate paragraphing Generally clear and appropriate transitions	Appropriate length to cover topic Clearly and coherently focused (including a sufficient sense of audience) Thoughts generally organized and presented Generally logical and clear progression Assertions generally supported and/or illustrated	Generally free of errors in sentence structure spelling punctuation capitalization usage word choice
3 *adequate*	Adequate beginning, development, and conclusion Adequate paragraphing Adequate transitions Adequate progression	Adequate length to cover the topic Adequately focused (including some sense of audience) Thoughts adequately organized and presented Adequate progression Assertions adequately supported and/or illustrated	Relatively few errors in sentence structure spelling punctuation capitalization usage word choice
2 *fair*	Weak beginning, development, and conclusion Weak paragraphing Weak transitions	Not adequate length to cover topic Weakly focused (little sense of audience) Thoughts not clearly organized Unclear progression Assertions weakly supported and/or illustrated	Significant errors in sentence structure spelling/punctuation capitalization usage/word choice
1 *not adequate*	Serious and persistent errors in organizational structure paragraphing	Does not cover the topic Not focused (no sense of audience) Unorganized	Serious and persistent errors in sentence structure spelling/punctuation capitalization usage/word choice

Structure ______ Content ______ Mechanics ______ **TOTAL** ______

Appendix B. Writing Skills Rubric

(Research-based, requiring formal documentation)

Writing Skills Rubric

(Research-based, requiring formal documentation)

	Structure	Content	Mechanics	Research
5 *superior*	Clear beginning, development, and conclusion Appropriate paragraphing Clear and appropriate transitions	Appropriate length to cover topic Clearly and coherently focused (including a good sense of audience) Thoughts clearly organized and Logical and clear progression Assertions clearly supported and/or illustrated	Correct sentence structure Correct spelling Correct punctuation Correct capitalization Correct usage presented	Reference page included and in correct format Appropriately cited sources Appropriate # of resources Appropriate resources for thesis Appropriate word choice
4 *very good*	Generally clear beginning, development, and conclusion Generally appropriate paragraphing Generally clear and appropriate transitions	Appropriate length to cover topic Clearly and coherently focused (including a sufficient sense of audience) Thoughts generally organized and presented Generally logical and clear Assertions generally supported and/or illustrated	Generally free of errors in errors in sentence structure spelling punctuation capitalization usage progression	Reference page included and mostly in correct format Sources generally cited correctly Appropriate number of resources Mostly appropriate resources for thesis word choice
3 *adequate*	Adequate beginning, development, and conclusion Adequate paragraphing Adequate transitions	Adequate length to cover the topic Adequately focused (including some sense of audience) Thoughts adequately organized and presented Adequate progression Assertions adequately supported and/or illustrated	Relatively few errors in sentence structure spelling punctuation capitalization usage word choice	Adequate reference page Errors in citations Adequate but limited resources Adequate but limited choice of resources
2 *fair*	Weak beginning, development, and conclusion Weak paragraphing Weak transitions	Not adequate length to cover topic Weakly focused (little sense of audience) Thoughts not clearly organized Unclear progression Assertions weakly supported and/or illustrated	Significant errors in sentence structure spelling/punctuation capitalization usage/word choice	Significant errors in reference page citations choice of resources Not adequate resources
1 *not adequate*	Serious and persistent errors in organizational structure paragraphing	Does not cover the topic Not focused (no sense of audience) Unorganized	Serious and persistent errors in sentence structure/spelling punctuation/capitalization usage/word choice	No reference page and/or numerous format errors Sources not cited or incorrectly cited Few & inappropriate resources

Structure ____________ Content ____________ Mechanics ____________ **TOTAL** ____________

Appendix C. Critical Reasoning Rubric

Critical Reasoning Rubric

Purpose, Goal or End in View	Question at Issue or Problem to be Solved	Point of View or Frame of Reference	Empirical Dimension of Reasoning	Conceptual Dimension of Reasoning	Assumptions	Implication and Consequences	Inferences
Clear Significant Realistic Achievable	Important Answerable Writer understands requirements for settling question or solving problem Writer demonstrates a sense of audience	Broad Flexible Fair Clearly stated Consistently adhered to Alternatives considered Unique approach	Evidence gathered and reported clearly, fairly, accurately Relevant data Adequate information Evidence or data applied consistently	Demonstrates understanding of theories, axioms and rules Clear concepts used for reasoning Ideas relevant to issues at hand	Clearly articulated Justifiable Crucial Consistent Evidence of synthesis	Enunciated clearly Significant Realistic	Sound Meets reasonable and relevant standards of understanding Clearly drawn Justifiable Reasonable conclusions Consistent Unique approach
______	______	______	______	______	______	______	______

Score	Criteria
5	Element is present and addressed in an excellent manner
4	Element is present and addressed in a good manner
3	Element is present and adequately addressed
2	Element is present but not sufficiently addressed
1	Element is not present or, if present, is not addressed in an acceptable manner

Total Points ______ (40)

* This rubric is based on "Defining Critical Thinking" by Michael Scriven and Richard Paul, prepared for the National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking Instruction

Closing the Loop: From Classroom Assessment to Institutional Assessment

Janice Denton
Don O'Meara
Barbara Walvoord

Introduction

Raymond Walters College (RWC) is challenged with assessing general education outcomes across the curricula while taking into account its multiple missions and a student population with diverse educational goals. Benander, Denton & Walvoord (1997) have described how the first phase of this challenge was addressed. It can be summarized as follows.

To assess critical thinking/quantitative reasoning skills, a key outcome of general education, the faculty Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) developed and implemented an assessment plan that is carried out within the classroom, guided by each faculty member's pedagogy, and leads to new strategies to improve students' critical thinking/quantitative reasoning skills. The plan required all full-time faculty in the college to design and use a set of criteria and standards that measure critical thinking and/or quantitative reasoning skills in the context of regular course assignments and tests. The goal was to ensure that learning was being effectively assessed in the classrooms, with clear objectives, assignments, and criteria, and then to use that information to help improve classroom, departmental, and institutional instruction. Crucial to this process was a scoring rubric by which faculty criteria and standards for student learning in each classroom could be made explicit. For this purpose, the AAC chose a scoring procedure known as "Primary Trait Assessment" (PTA), which had been developed to score student work for the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

In our 1998 presentation, we will bring the story up to date with the following significant new developments. Phase two of the challenge was to move from classroom assessment to institutional assessment. The AAC proposed that department faculty members would meet during the academic year to share their assessment data and results, and participate in writing a department summary of the discussions. It was anticipated that these discussions would not only lead to improvement in the test/assignment, but also generate new teaching and curricular ideas that could be tried and reviewed in subsequent years, and thus, create a feedback loop in the assessment cycle. The test/assignment, primary trait scales, and department summaries would be kept in the Office of Academic Affairs. These summaries would be used to write a college summary describing how the College is enhancing student learning, thereby meeting NCA's expectation of institution-wide assessment of general education.

The Department Discussions

In Fall 1996, the AAC, working with Barbara Walvoord, drafted guidelines that offered departments suggestions about how to handle the department discussions and how to report the PTA data. During the 1996–1997 academic year, the departments used the guidelines for the first time.

Department meetings varied widely in their tone and content. Departments accustomed to external accreditation by their disciplinary associations were more comfortable with the departmental discussion. But to some departments, this kind of self-evaluation of teaching and learning was unusual. Despite the differences in tone and content, one overarching theme emerged; the departmental meetings spurred further thought and action.

Although all department discussions were productive, the following issues emerged and will have to be dealt with in order to keep the assessment process moving forward.

1. Many departments had concerns about how they would expand the primary trait activities and discussions to include adjunct faculty. The greater the percentage of adjunct faculty in the department the more urgent was this issue.
2. Many faculty felt overwhelmed at having yet another meeting at the end of the spring quarter.
3. Faculty who use multiple choice assignments and tests are still very unsure of how to construct primary trait scales to assess student learning.
4. This was the first time the departmental report form had been used, and faculty had differing interpretations of what the questions were asking.
5. While some departments are familiar with pedagogical methodology, others are less so. All faculty are comfortable with discipline specific content, but some struggle with designing alternate ways to present the content to enhance student learning.
6. The Academic Assessment Committee had forced departments to deal with the assessment issue head-on and internal departmental dynamics influenced how the issues were discussed. There were also a few faculty members who said that the report would never be read and so was a waste of time. Some faculty were critical of the method of sharing "apples and oranges" and questioned the usefulness of the information.

Conclusion

For the first round, the committee was happy to have the department reports in hand. Members of the Academic Assessment Committee were not dismayed by the elements of confusion and cynicism. The fact that 90% of the faculty had submitted reports indicated a great deal of classroom examination and thought. The committee members had recognized that the department-level discussions would be challenging and they were heartened by the fact that for the first time ever, departmental conversations had addressed key issues of learning and teaching.

The AAC analyzed the departments' reports and used the information, in the aggregate, to describe how the College is enhancing student learning. Walvoord and members of the AAC (Walvoord and Anderson 1998) report the results of the 1996-1997 department discussions and conclude that even although the process was challenging, conversations about teaching and learning had taken place, and "the process had been deeply embedded in the classrooms and departments–the places where real change must be located."

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Chapter 9

Assessment of Student Academic Achievement

THE Collaborative Imperative

103rd Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
March 28-31, 1998 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

Assessing Institutional Goals and Student Learning: Strategies for Success

Gloria M. Rogers
Julia Williams

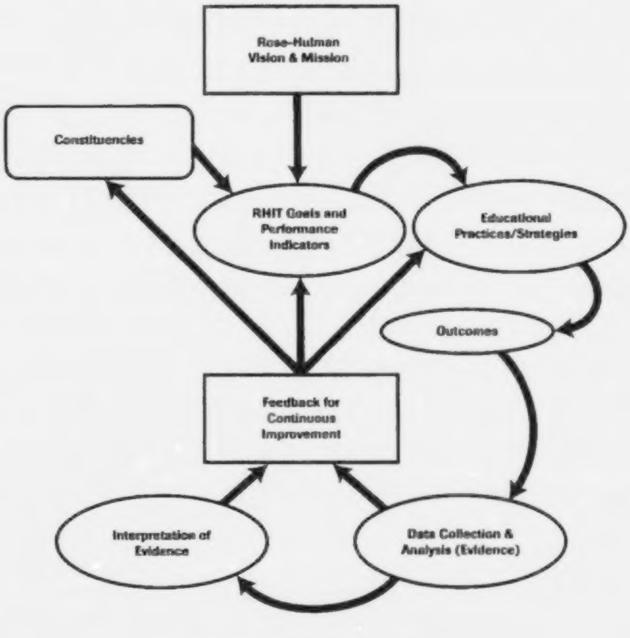
Introduction

Using systematic processes to engage faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders in the identification of institutional goals and the development and implementation of a campus-wide assessment plan can be an overwhelming task for an institution with limited human and financial resources. In the spring of 1996, the President of Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology appointed the "Commission on Assessment of Student Outcomes" (CASO) to review requirements for the assessment of student outcomes by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) and the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). The Commission was charged to develop a plan that would not only satisfy the requirements of these agencies but would also provide information to be used by the Institute to improve the quality of student outcomes and institute services. This paper describes the strategies we developed and lessons learned from our experience.

Setting the Stage

The Commission consists of 24 members representing faculty from each academic department, staff from each of the primary service areas, and students. It is co-chaired by a faculty member and an administrator from the office of Institutional Research and Assessment. The initial stages of work involved developing a common framework for the assessment planning process. The Commission adopted the assessment model, "Assessment for Continuous Improvement," (Rogers 1995) and agreed to use the methods for developing the assessment plan as outlined in, "Stepping Ahead: An Assessment Plan Development Guide." (Rogers and Sando 1996)

Consensus on the framework to be used to guide our work was an important step in developing a comprehensive assessment plan. The adoption of common assessment terminology and an understanding of the steps involved in the continuous improvement model provided a foundation to support the work of the Commission.


Rose-Hulman Vision & Mission
Constituencies
RHIT Goals and Performance Indicators
Educational Practices/Strategies
Outcomes
Feedback for Continuous Improvement
Interpretation of Evidence
Data Collection & Analysis (Evidence)

Assessment for Continuous Improvement

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Goal Development

It was important that the Institute goals flowed from the vision and mission statements of the Institute. These statements had been articulated in an Institute-wide, comprehensive process in 1993. The Institute goal statements were taken from the Rose-Hulman College Catalog, NCA Reports, and other Institute planning documents. The Commission took all of the goal statements and synthesized them into four Institute-wide goals derived from the vision and mission statements. These are presented in Table 1.

VISION:	To be the best undergraduate engineering, mathematics, and science educational institution in the world.	
MISSION:	To provide its students with the best possible preparation for careers in engineering, mathematics, and science	
GOALS:	***1. Input goal***	Recruit highly qualified students, faculty, and staff
	2. Quality goal	Provide an excellent learning environment
	3. Climate goal	Encourage the realization and recognition of the full potential of all campus community members
	4. Student Outcome goal	Instill in our graduates skills appropriate to their professions and life-long learning

Table 1. Rose-Hulman Vision, Mission, and Goals

Key stakeholders were identified and brought into the planning process to validate the goals we developed. The stakeholders included members of our Board of Trustees, National Board of Advisors, employment recruiters, alumni, students, faculty, and staff. Each of these groups was surveyed or interviewed about the appropriateness of the goals to the vision and mission of the Institute. Once there was consensus on the Institute goals, the Commission began a year-long process of developing sub-goals and performance criteria. Because of the size of the Commission, we formed sub-teams of faculty, staff, and students to look at the individual goals. Each team drafted sub-goals and performance criteria for the goal they were assigned. The sub-goals and performance criteria were brought back to the full Commission for comments and suggestions and revision. An example of the sub-goals developed is given in Table. 2.

Goal 1. Recruit highly qualified students, faculty, and staff	
Sub-Goal A.	Recruit, admit, and enroll highly qualified **students**
Sub-Goal B.	Recruit and hire highly qualified **faculty**
Sub-Goal C.	Recruit and hire highly qualified **staff**

Table 2. Example of sub-goal development

Performance Criteria

It is the development of performance criteria that makes the sub-goals measurable. During the discussion of Goal 4 (student outcomes) there was much debate about our educational goals for students that reached across all disciplines. This debate was also a very valuable part of the assessment plan development process. It challenged the educational community to articulate and debate the values that underlie each goal. Table 3 is an example of the sub-goals that were developed for Goal 4.

For each of these sub-goals, performance criteria were developed that further defined the student outcome that will enable us to "measure" the level of student achievement on the sub-goal. We have chosen sub-goal D, "An ability to work in teams" as an example of performance criteria that were developed (see Table 4). After the Commission had completed the sub-team work, the sub-goals and performance criteria were put on the Web for internal review and suggestions.

Goal 4. Instill in our graduates skills appropriate to their professions and life-long learning	
Sub-Goal A.	A recognition of ethical and professional responsibilities
Sub-Goal B.	An understanding of how contemporary issues shape and are shaped by mathematics, science, and engineering
Sub-Goal C.	An ability to recognize the role of professionals in the global society and to understand diverse cultural and humanistic traditions
Sub-Goal D.	An ability to work effectively in teams
Sub-Goal E.	An ability to communicate effectively in oral, written, graphical, and visual forms
Sub-Goal F.	An ability to apply the skills and knowledge necessary for mathematical, scientific, and engineering practices
Sub-Goal G.	An ability to interpret graphical, numerical, and textual data
Sub-Goal H.	An ability to design and conduct experiments
Sub-Goal I.	An ability to design a product or process to satisfy a client's needs subject to constraints

Table 3. Sub-goals for student outcome Goal 4

Sub-Goal D. An ability to work in teams	
Criterion 1.	Share responsibilities and duties
Criterion 2.	Take on different roles when applicable
Criterion 3.	Listen and understand the perspectives and viewpoints of the other team members
Criterion 4.	Analyze ideas objectively
Criterion 5.	Discern feasible solutions
Criterion 6.	Develop a strategy for action
Criterion 7.	Resolve differences
Criterion 8.	Remain focused on the task

Table 4. Performance criteria for sub-goal D

Data Collection Method

Once the performance criteria were established for each of the sub-goals, the Commission needed to determine what methods were going to be used to collect evidence on student outcomes. A team of seven faculty members worked during the summer to develop a plan for data collection and evaluation. The faculty discussed what criteria should be applied for choosing the data collection method. The primary criteria chosen were: effectiveness, efficiency, and the need for the process to be minimally intrusive on both faculty and students. An in-house workshop was held on data collection methods. The methods discussed were both quantitative and qualitative. Based on the criteria, the team decided to use electronic portfolios (e-portfolios) as the primary method of data collection for the performance criteria selected. The team recommended that a prototype electronic infrastructure be developed during the 1997-98 academic year.

There are currently four sub-teams preparing for the implementation of the electronic portfolio system: Criteria/ Rubric, Education, Prototype Planners, Electronic Infrastructure. A group of 30 sophomore students will be selected from among paid volunteers to participate in the prototype and will be placing materials in e-portfolios throughout the spring quarter of the current academic year. The volunteers will be introduced to the system by the Education sub-team. This team has developed materials that it will use for students during the fall 1998 full implementation. The students in the prototype group will participate in the evaluation of the system through surveys and focus groups. The primary evaluation questions will be: How well did the electronic submission of materials work? How difficult was it to identify work to submit? What were problems students encountered in any part of the process? and, Was the "education" provided sufficient? The Rubrics sub-team is preparing rubrics based on the performance criteria that will be used to evaluate the students' materials placed in the portfolio. During the summer, faculty will evaluate the material placed in the e-portfolios to determine the effectiveness of the process of accessing student material and the effectiveness of the rubrics. This information will enable the Commission to evaluate the efficacy of the data collection system prior to full implementation with first year students in the fall of 1998.

Staying Focused

During this process it was critical to keep the Commission focused and moving forward. Using sub-teams and working with sub-team facilitators helped to keep the process on track. Each of the sub-teams had a specific charge and reported to the full Commission on a regular basis. The tasks were inter-related so the full Commission meetings were energetic and productive. Each sub-team was interested in what the other groups were doing, and the attendance and participation rates were very high with the meetings often lasting beyond the time allotted. Faculty leadership and student and staff involvement were critical to the work that has been accomplished. All of the participants were equally involved in the discussions and decisions. The students provided valuable insight and made important contributions to the overall process. Staff from the areas of Student Affairs, Admissions, Learning Center, and Career Services were involved throughout the process and provided invaluable suggestions on plan development and implementation. The faculty played a critical role in getting their colleagues to "buy-in" to this assessment method. Having faculty from each department represented in the planning is necessary, but not sufficient, in getting the faculty to support the Commission's work. The Commission has tried to be sensitive to criticisms and concerns that faculty have expressed. The Commission has made a presentation to the academic department heads, the administrative council, each of the academic departments, and the Student Government Association to inform them about the plan and solicit input.

Lessons Learned

We have learned several valuable lessons from the Rose-Hulman experience in developing an Institute-wide assessment plan.

- developing the plan takes time
- institute-wide representation in the planning process is critical
- inertia is alive and well
- test the plan
- improve the plan
- assessment is not free
- mistakes will be made

Developing a comprehensive assessment plan with Institute-wide representation will take time. The assessment plan will be effective only if it is well thought through and the campus community is informed. Faculty, staff, and students are "volunteers" in this process, and it is important to recognize and honor their time constraints. A staff of two or three could probably develop a comprehensive assessment plan in a week, but our experience would indicate that it would not be of the same quality nor would it be endorsed by the rest of the community with any degree of enthusiasm. There is much education that needs to take place when working with a number of people with diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and level of commitment to the project. Laying the groundwork by providing information on assessment processes and methods is critical before the actual work is begun. Involving key stakeholders in the beginning of the process is also time consuming, yet critical to the success of the process. Allow plenty of time!

The importance of involving representatives from all campus areas cannot be stressed enough. Identify what units on campus are key stakeholders in this process. Of course, it is critical to involve faculty from each of the academic units. It is best that they be willing to participate, although a reluctant faculty member is better than no participation at all from an academic unit. With focused, relevant meetings, they can be "won over." Don't underestimate the importance of the involvement of key administrative units. Representatives from areas such as Student Affairs, Admissions, Career Services, etc., bring important perspectives and skills to the process. They have resources at their disposal that will enhance the implementation and administration of the plan. Student representatives from student government and other key student organizations are also important to the work of the Commission. Since the primary focus of the assessment plan is the assessment of student outcomes, they provide a reality check that isn't available from any other campus constituency. Their insights have been important to the level of confidence with which the Commission has moved ahead in several areas. For example, there was concern about getting students to "voluntarily" participate in the electronic portfolio process. This could have been a stumbling block for the Commission, but the enthusiasm of the student members who saw the personal benefits the electronic portfolio would have for students (e.g., placement) encouraged us to move forward.

Having broad representation from the educational community should not lull the planning team into believing that implementation will go smoothly. Resistance to change is alive and well. We are in the early stages of implementation, and some campus members are already expressing reservations about the plan. Some of the concerns are a result of the lack of information. The Commission has undertaken an aggressive education series for the campus to better inform all constituencies. Some concerns expressed will only be allayed through the implementation process. For example, the Commission has indicated that we are not assessing individual faculty members or specific courses. However, some faculty have expressed concern that the Commission is proposing to do just that. They feel that the evaluation of material placed in an e-portfolio by a student will, in effect, be evaluating the course from which it came (and, by implication, the faculty member). In reality, faculty will be evaluating the material in the e-portfolio using holistic methods and not be "re-grading" the student work. It is likely that the fears surrounding this issue will go away after a couple of years of experience with the assessment process and the nature of the reports that are generated from the evaluation.

A great deal of thought and effort goes into developing a comprehensive assessment plan. Unfortunately, things seldom go as planned. The complex nature of the design and implementation of an e-portfolio system, development of rubrics for assessing student outcomes, and the education of the campus community all point to the need to "test" the plan before full implementation. This accomplishes two things. First, it allows feedback to the planning team on how the plan can be improved before full implementation. The team will be able to note oversights and correct errors in judgment about how the process will work before the stakes are high. Second, it gives the campus community an opportunity to see how the plan will be implemented and how it functions. Telling someone about the plan is not the same as being able to provide information about how it has actually been implemented and how it is going to be improved. This will increase the level of acceptance and reception from the various constituencies before full implementation.

The development of an assessment plan should not be seen as a static process. With each cycle of data collection, evaluation, and feedback to constituencies, the plan itself should be evaluated. Questions that should be asked include:

- Is the plan linked to institutional goals?
- Are the performance criteria appropriate to the goals?
- Does the plan fulfill the information needs of decision makers?
- Are the results generated from the implementation of the plan being adequately disseminated?
- Is the plan cost-effective?

Answers to these questions, as well as others raised by the community, will provide information on ways to improve the plan. An assessment plan is only a vehicle by which a campus can assess its effectiveness in reaching its goals and should have the improvement of educational processes as its outcome. In essence, a "plan" should never become more important than its intended effect.

Those entering into the assessment plan development process need to be aware that developing and implementing a comprehensive plan is not without cost. A comprehensive assessment system will require both human and financial resources. There will be human costs measured in time spent by faculty, staff, and students' involvement in planning, implementation, and evaluation. There will be financial cost for summer stipends for faculty, development of a data base, administration, and systems of data collection. The process cannot be left to manage itself. The adage, "everyone's job is nobody's job" is especially true in the management of the assessment process. Someone must be responsible for being sure the mechanics of the process are attended to. Depending on the nature of the process and staff available, the responsible person could be a faculty member with some release time, someone in the institutional research office, or someone hired especially for this purpose.

Those beginning to develop a comprehensive plan for assessment need to be prepared for setbacks. Mistakes will be made, and it is important to be flexible and open to suggestions from those outside the planning process. If the planning team appears to be defensive or insensitive to the input of others their attitude will have a negative impact on the overall effectiveness of the plan. Open debate and dialog should be encouraged. Consensus and not "victory" should be the goal of the team. This will facilitate the acceptance of the plan by the academic community and generate overall "buy-in" from important constituencies.

Summary

Our experience has taught us that a solid foundation in assessment concepts is critical to a successful assessment process. With a common frame of reference, team members are able to interact on a level playing field in addressing critical issues related to the continuous improvement of educational processes. To be successful, the planning process should be inclusive, thorough, and well managed. The institution needs to be committed to providing the long-term resources needed to implement and continuously improve the assessment process. This commitment should be derived from confidence that the process will yield valuable results to the institution that go beyond the exercise just described.

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Show Me The Learning: Perspectives on Implementing Student Outcomes Assessment in a Community College

Andrea Greene
Gail Mee
Harold Cranswick

Introduction

Colleges across the country are challenged with implementing plans to assess student academic achievement in ways that can be sustained by their institutions in the long term. Mesa Community College (MCC) faculty, staff, and administrators have found that flexible relationships among people in a variety of college roles are necessary in order to sustain such agendas.

Mesa Community College in Mesa, Arizona, is a large (23,000 students) and well-established college in the Maricopa Community College District. The college has a complex environment including approximately 250 full-time and 750 part-time faculty, a growing and diverse student body, and a wide array of comprehensive academic, career preparation, and developmental programs. In addition to the main campus, the Extended Campus includes four sites where specialized courses and programs are offered. Creating the infrastructure to support systematic and ongoing student assessment within this context has required commitment and collaboration among faculty and administrators.

For the past five years, the college community has been engaged in the process of developing and implementing a plan to assess student academic achievement. A series of several significant initial challenges was encountered before the college came to consensus on an effective and workable assessment design that could be sustained in the long term. The past two years have been dedicated to implementing the student assessment plan and establishing it as an integral part of the college's commitment to assessing institutional effectiveness.

Overview of the Plan

MCC's plan for assessing student academic achievement is structured around the three major areas of educational emphasis within the college, specifically assessing student learning that results from:

- a general education
- occupational degree and certificate programs
- developmental education

The assessment plan is accomplished through the use of a wide variety of assessment methods including both faculty-developed measures and norm-referenced standardized tests. The 1996-97 academic year was the first year of implementing the plan, which was accomplished through a series of events during "Assessment Week" and under the theme, "Show me the Learning!" During that time, assessment procedures and measures were pilot-tested with students who met certain criteria for being assessed. Namely, the students had to have completed the majority of their coursework in general education, or to be enrolled in the final course in an occupational program of study or the developmental education program.

Because it was a pilot, results were not used as a basis for making decisions about programmatic or curricular changes. Rather, research support staff used the results of the data analyses to make observations about the data that were used by faculty to make revisions to the measures, scoring guidelines, or administration procedures. For example, faculty determined from the pilot data that more rigorous training was needed on how to use the scoring rubric for the oral communications assessment, and that the scoring rubric for written communication needed more precise definitions. These, and other suggested modifications, were made during Fall 1997. Full-scale implementation of student assessment, including a pretesting component, will occur in Spring 1998.

Factors for Success and Continuing Challenges

Through the past several years of planning and implementation, the college has identified several factors that seem to be critical for establishing a successful student assessment system:

- The chief academic officer believes in student assessment, not because it is required for accreditation by NCA but because it improves student learning, informs the planning process, and ultimately improves the college's programs.
- Faculty lead the assessment process, but considerable technical expertise and support are readily available to them through the Office of Research and Planning.
- The use of sound assessment practices lends credibility to the entire process.
- Large numbers of faculty have been involved in defining, deliberating, and solving major assessment issues; and growing numbers of faculty are advocating for student assessment as a new way of doing business.
- The college has made a long-term commitment of resources that are necessary to support assessing student learning above the course level.

In the absence of any of these five conditions, the college believes that the sustainability of a student assessment program will falter. Faculty must believe that there is value in assessing student learning; this often represents a considerable change in fundamental value systems that may at first seem intractable. And, when faculty see that college leaders share this value system and support it both philosophically and financially, the beginning of a culture change is under way. Finally, if the student assessment program is conducted using well-established and sound assessment methodology and practice, the credibility of the entire process seems to be enhanced.

At MCC, faculty are committed to investing their time and energies into student assessment because they believe it will improve student learning. For administrators, results from student assessment inform the instructional planning process and, ultimately, drive budget decisions. From both perspectives, student assessment is part of a holistic and reiterative continuous improvement process.

According to the NCA staff analysis of MCC's latest progress report on student assessment, "the College has created the foundation upon which to build a model assessment program." The college understands that many challenges still lie ahead in bringing this successful pilot to scale, and in institutionalizing student assessment college-wide. Other institutions may be able to learn both from the factors for success as well as the challenges of sustaining a program, such as:

- Pressures from the accrediting agency create an urgency and a focus for establishing and implementing a student assessment plan. Once the accreditation process is completed, the momentum to keep student assessment in the forefront as an instructional initiative must be sustained.
- At MCC, participation in assessment above the course level is not a mandatory component of a student's course of study. Therefore, recruiting the participation of a sufficient number of students is an ongoing challenge.
- MCC has been quite successful in garnering support for student assessment from full-time residential faculty. Efforts now must focus on developing effective ways to communicate with and involve large numbers of adjunct faculty.

Conclusion

Developing and implementing a viable plan for assessing student academic achievement is a process, not an event. The experiences of Mesa Community College faculty and administrators most likely are not unique; false starts and major course corrections must be anticipated as part of that process. Once implementation begins, tangible results are obtained, and information is cycled back into the system, the community experiences first-hand the potential benefits of assessment to students and the college. Collaboration and commitment to assessment among all members of the college community can assure that a system, once established, will be sustained.

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An Assessment Model, Processes, and Outcomes: Where's the Beef?

Linda L. Baer
Jon Quistgaard
Ivan Lee Weir

Several years ago the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools articulated its emphasis on the development of university assessment plans, which became a requirement for accreditation for all the colleges and universities in the North Central region. In its articulation, the Commission was intentionally non-directive as to the content and form of these assessment plans, although it sponsored several workshops and meetings that focused on assessment planning and implementation. North Central required only that assessment should include examination of student cognitive development through learning outcomes, and should reflect the mission and goals of the university.

For Bemidji State University, North Central's lack of directiveness became an advantage because it required the University to re-examine its mission and goals and to rethink from a global perspective what was the true essence of a higher education. Fortunately, this process was already underway because of the quality improvement initiatives undertaken by the state of Minnesota, and because of the Minnesota Transfer Agreement that was adopted to assure all community and state college students of a seamless transfer of associate degrees and credits from one institution to another.

Bemidji State University was an early participant in the Minnesota quality initiative that became known as the *Q7 Indicators of Quality*. By operationalizing the meaning of quality indicators such as "Preparation for Post-Secondary Education," "Higher Order Thinking," "Scientific and Quantitative Literacy," "Global Understanding," "Career Preparation," "Multicultural Perspective," and "Responsible Citizenship," the University developed a framework for examining student learning in terms of the intended outcomes of a higher education.

Historically, Bemidji State University had been a small comprehensive liberal arts institution that enrolled students primarily from northern Minnesota. As the University increased in size, students began to arrive from 35 countries, 40 states, and all of the 87 Minnesota counties. The defining characteristics of the student body changed from being mostly male students ranging in age from 18 to 24 years to mostly females (53% in 1997). Nearly half of the current student body is older than 24 years, four to five percent are American Indians, and another four to five percent come from other countries.

Before measurement of educational outcomes, it was necessary to have a theory of education that encompassed its processes, purposes, and meaning, which would be equally applicable given the changing demographics of the University's student population. A preliminary educational model (Baer, Knodel, Quistgaard, and Weir 1993) was developed that viewed education as a whole life process, beginning with cognitive and value development in very early childhood years and cumulating with the contributions of higher education not only to one's knowledge, information, and abilities, but also to one's career preparation and understanding of the value of life-long learning.

Prior to the decade of the 90s, many comprehensive liberal arts colleges and universities, including Bemidji State, paid little attention to post-graduation outcomes of their students, and many faculty members shied away from becoming involved in students' career activities. These concerns were thought to be beyond the pale of academia. However, with the coming of incredible changes in the workplace, the advance of information technologies, a fast-moving economy, and the end of the baby-boomer era of student enrollments, students began to demand more relevance in their educational programs. As a consequence, institutions of higher education found it useful to be able to "prove" what value a higher education added to one's life chances.

Several authors began to articulate the issues and problems associated with workforce and workplace change. During the Bush Administration, the Secretary of Labor published SCANS, the Secretary's list of competencies and skills deemed necessary for a high school graduate to compete in the current workplace. Before becoming Secretary of Labor, Robert Reich (1991) produced *Work of Nations* in which he articulated the elements of a higher education and, incidentally, provided an efficient framework for developing measures of educational intentions, preparation, and outcomes based on 21st century economic and occupational characteristics (Baer 1993). "The formal education of an incipient symbolic analyst," Reich said, "thus entails refining four basic skills: abstraction, system thinking, experimentation, and collaboration." (229) From these theoretical perspectives came the underpinnings of the Bemidji assessment model. The assessment model was partially derived from Minnesota's Q7 Indicators of Quality and took into account the changing educational and workplace requirements that reflect workforce needs of the 21st century. In addition, it includes a method of outcome measurement based on Reich's categories of occupations to demonstrate the value of a higher education.

Because of the newness of assessment, several steps were necessary in the developmental process to assure University and faculty acceptance. First, faculty had to participate in the development of the general model. To accomplish this objective, the University formed an *ad hoc* interest group of faculty members and administrative personnel, department chairs, and research specialists who spent a week long retreat discussing and writing about the elements of an assessment model for a comprehensive liberal education. From this exercise, a number of outcomes were achieved. The group decided the model must reflect students' educational needs that are satisfied by Bemidji State University. It must be responsive to the mission and goals of the University, and it must include three dimensions of student learning that were defined as cognitive or intellectual development, emotional and social development, and career and societal development. The model had to be general enough to be applicable to every department and program in the University, and it had to be based on measurable student learning outcomes.

Following the *ad hoc* interest group activity, the President requested an Advisory Assessment Committee be formed by faculty and staff. This committee, which continues to function, was charged with formalizing the University Assessment Plan and overseeing its implementation by the Office of Research and Assessment. In addition, the Advisory Assessment Committee continues to provide assistance to all departments and programs of the University in the development of their plans based on the framework articulated in the general University Assessment Plan.

A final step in the process has been to institutionalize assessment at the department and program level by packaging it with the Minnesota State College and University requirement for Five-Year Reviews. In this regard, Bemidji State University was assisted greatly by one of its sister institutions, Winona State University, which graciously provided Bemidji State with its Program Review Model. This model conceptualized program review in three tiers, each having its purpose, source of information, and targeted audience. It encompasses both formative and outcome evaluation, and identifies data sources for each.

The Bemidji model of program assessment is derived from the University's stated mission and goals. It is based on three Dimensions of Student Learning. Dimension 1 is Intellectual Development, having Higher Order Thinking, and Knowledge, Values and Abilities Related to the Arts, Humanities, Sciences, and Specialized Fields of Study as outcomes. Dimension 2 is Understanding of Self/Relating to Others. Outcomes for this dimension include Values, Communication, Human Diversity, and Self Development. The third dimension in the Bemidji State University assessment model is Participation in an Emerging Global Society with Readiness for Careers and Responsible Citizenship as outcomes. Although departments and programs are encouraged to select their own measurement instruments, suggestions ranged from adoption of standardized tests, juried portfolios and creative activities to locally developed content area entrance and exit exams. To discover career and societal outcomes of its graduates, the University regularly conducts employer and alumni surveys.

The presentation to the members of the North Central Association will include a specific description of the assessment model, mechanics and methods used for implementation, and a short status report on how departments and programs have been using the model. Handouts will include figures and diagrams of the model together with its implementation guidelines.

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Getting from Objectives to Outcomes: Assessment and Criteria Three and Four

Diane O. Tebbetts

For the past several years, NCA member institutions and those aspiring to NCA accreditation have known that they must develop and institute an assessment plan. More recently they have been told that simply having a plan in place is not enough: information collected through implementation of the plan must be appraised and used to stimulate improvements in student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness. Reporting on data and then filing it in a vice president's or department chair's office is not enough. Instead of merely including the assessment plan as a chapter, appendix, or separate volume in the Self-Study Report, institutions must incorporate both the plan and the results of the entire assessment process into their discussions of how they meet Criteria Three and Four.

Elements of the Assessment Plan

The first step toward meeting this requirement is to ascertain that the assessment plan contains all necessary elements. First, it must flow from the institutional mission statement and objectives. What does the institution publicly state as its purposes for existing? In a complete plan, each of these purposes will be investigated and assessed, with primacy given to assessment of specifically educational purposes. While it is important that institutions be sure they manage their resources wisely, streamline registration procedures to increase efficiency and decrease frustration levels, furnish safe and attractive residence halls, provide personal and career counseling, and on and on, the fundamental obligation–increasingly insisted upon by employers, the public, and the federal government–is to assure that students' learning objectives are met and that they know more when they complete a class or a degree than they knew when they arrived at college.

While it has become commonplace to assert that the assessment plan must provide measurable objectives for each stated institutional purpose, too often plans do not specify what will happen if data reveal that those objectives are not being met. A complete plan must also include a method for using results to stimulate growth, change, and improvement. Having a defined, formal feedback loop as an element of the assessment plan should assure that those with responsibility for change exercise it. Continued assessment should then reflect whether subsequent revisions result in the desired improvements in outcomes.

Assessment and Criterion Three

In addressing Criterion Three, institutions must show that they are accomplishing their educational and other purposes. NCA's description of an acceptable pattern of evidence underscores the necessity for a thorough and complete program of educational outcomes assessment that documents skill proficiencies, completion of a coherent general education component, and mastery of appropriate levels of knowledge. Self-Study Coordinators are responsible for helping their institutions evaluate the types, amounts, reliability, and validity of data collected through the assessment plan. They must also stimulate evaluation of the kinds of uses being made of those data.

In developing task descriptions for various self-study committees, the following questions related to assessment should be considered:

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- *Does the assessment plan provide for measurement of all publicly stated institutional objectives?* Without meaningful measures, the institution cannot know how well it is achieving those objectives.

- *While including ways to measure the efficiency or success of non-academic functions, thus assuring overall institutional effectiveness, is the emphasis on measuring success in meeting educational objectives?* While operating the institution in ways that satisfy students, meet community needs, and maintain fiscal viability are all certainly important, providing instruction that allows students to learn what they need for further study or a career should remain the core objective of any educational institution.

- *Are all objectives measurable?* As painful as it sometimes may be, objectives must be written in a way that makes measurement possible. A certain percent of students will achieve passing scores on licensure or graduate school aptitude tests, for instance. A specific amount of money will be added to the endowment by a certain date. The number of students using the library will expand by a specific amount within the next year. Objectives will vary greatly between institutions; but if an objective is not stated in terms of numbers, percents, dates, or something measurable in concrete terms, determination of success will remain subjective, potentially unconvincing, and therefore powerless to effect change.

- *Has the institution set benchmarks or acceptable performance levels to indicate success on each objective?* A measurable objective should contain its own measure of success. Some institutions may wish to identify a single level of success. Others may institute a range that recognizes performance that is entirely satisfactory, acceptable but in need of monitoring, or unacceptable and requiring direct action.

- *What use is made of results indicating success?* If results are not known outside departmental or administrative offices, the assessment program is not achieving its potential. At the very least, success is a morale builder. Some institutions may choose to award special recognition or even extra funds to successful programs.

- *What happens when results indicate a need for improvement?* Without a formal feedback loop requiring analysis of the problem, its probable causes, and corrective actions to be implemented, meaningful change may not occur. An action plan specifying who is responsible for implementation and a timeline for completion of various tasks is essential if real change is to occur.

- *How well is the feedback loop completed to initiate change where needed?* Even if the assessment plan is complete on paper, with outcomes objectives, feedback loop, and action plans, it must actually be operating with participation from every appropriate level.

All of these questions, however, merely help committees assess completeness of the assessment plan. The self-study must then document that the process is operational and that meaningful changes are occurring. Committees must, therefore, address two further questions:

- *What specific changes can the institution point to as a result of implementing the assessment plan?* After determining areas where objectives are not being met, the self-study must record how the institution responded. While it is not necessary to reference every single change coming out of the assessment program, the self-study must showcase enough action to demonstrate clearly that the institution is using assessment in a good-faith effort to enhance student learning and its own effectiveness.

- *Have those changes had any measurable effect?* While assessment programs at some colleges and universities may not have been in place long enough to show verifiable change, to the extent that it is possible to do so, the self-study should document improvements that have occurred.

Assessment and Criterion Four

Within Criterion Four, Self-Study Coordinators must guide committees in investigating and discussing how continued implementation of the assessment plan is expected to enhance institutional ability to accomplish purposes and strengthen educational effectiveness in the future. Assessment of the assessment plan itself must, of course, be part of ongoing institutional planning processes.

Again, Coordinators must provide committees with task descriptions that will guide them toward useful evaluation of the role assessment plays in strengthening the institution so that it can continue to achieve its objectives. Committees might consider several questions:

- ◇ *What are the implications of assessment results to date for the institution's future?* Obviously, assessment results must be widely known throughout the institution before this question can be answered. Without a history of using assessment to make changes, and then assessing those changes for their effectiveness, it will be hard to draw conclusions. Even institutions that do not have a long assessment history, however, can investigate how assessment data have been incorporated into the planning and budgeting that has taken place since the assessment plan was first implemented.

- ◇ *What strengths can the institution continue to build on?* Strengths are discovered and confirmed through the assessment process. Assessment data validate the institution's perception of its strengths, which it identifies in the Self-Study Report.

- ◇ *What resources will be needed to address any identified weaknesses?* If the assessment plan is being taken seriously at all levels, from the governing board and administration to the department and individual faculty members, the feedback loop will impinge upon institutional planning and budgeting. If a college, for instance, finds that graduates of a particular program and their employers are not satisfied with proficiency in skills dependent on having up-to-date instructional equipment, and if that college does not presently have sufficient funds for upgrading, then it must develop in its planning process some appropriate strategies for getting those resources or consider closing the program.

These questions assume that the assessment plan itself is effective. As a part of Criterion Four, however, the institution must also show that it regularly assesses the value of that assessment plan.

- ◇ *How effective is the assessment plan in measuring student academic outcomes?* If faculty, departments, and administration are not getting enough information or valid information, then the plan itself must be changed. Perhaps each objective should be assessed with additional measures, or perhaps a particular measure should be dropped or replaced.

- ◇ *How effective is the plan in measuring institutional efficiencies?* If the same areas—such as parking or the registration process—perennially receive low marks in opinion surveys, or if only surface or easily attainable efficiencies are measured, the institution may not be getting all it needs from the assessment plan.

Conclusion

The days of simply displaying an attractively designed and bound assessment plan, even one that appears to be thorough and to meet NCA requirements regarding multiple measures, faculty ownership, reasonable timelines, and so forth, are past. Self-Study Reports must now reflect the ways assessment is actually used on campus to help achieve institutional purposes and to assure continuing viability. It is the responsibility of the Self-Study Coordinator to guide committees contributing to the report in positive ways to embed assessment in their discussions of Criteria Three and Four. Properly implemented, a good assessment plan will be an extremely valuable source of data about how well the institution is achieving its academic and other purposes and how prepared it is to continue achieving those purposes into the future.

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Core Curriculum Assessment: A Snapshot in Time

Joslen Letscher
Anne Hummer

The Core Curriculum

The University of Detroit Mercy has developed a distinctive Core Curriculum. Many universities designate a very limited number of courses that all students must take; others designate areas from which students select courses. This Core Curriculum combines aspects of both under the heading of six Core objectives intended to reflect the mission and purposes of the University. For the first two objectives, (Communication Skills, Mathematical and Computer Skills), specific courses are designated that all students must take. For the other four objectives (Scientific Literacy, Meaning and Values, History and Culture, Social Responsibility) students may select from a broader number of courses that have been approved by the Core Curriculum Committee.

The University's Core Curriculum spans all four years of the undergraduate programs. The rationale for this is founded on the assumption that students should continue to develop the skills, methodologies, and values learned in earlier core courses.

How to Assess the Core

How to assess a core structured in this manner is a primary issue. Universities that have core curricula based on a fixed number of courses that all students must take can give standardized tests to determine the effectiveness of those curricula. This Core Curriculum does not lend itself to this approach, especially with objectives containing multiple course selections; instead, actual student work exhibits are evaluated. Even in the case of the first two objectives, which require specific courses, the development of these objectives continues throughout the junior and senior years. This, for example, is reflected in early writing courses whose outcomes are then intended to be developed through writing across the curriculum.

Because of these complexities, the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee was led to an assessment design that does not attempt to measure, on a pre- or post- basis, development of the six Core Curriculum objectives across various samples of freshman and senior students. Instead, the Committee's approach is to measure learning outcomes at various time intervals (the snapshot) so as to determine how effectively the Core Curriculum promotes the development of a genuine liberal education through the six basic objectives.

This innovative and unique approach attempts to assess the Core Curriculum as a whole, rather than assessing a composite of individual scores or sets of courses. Over time, any one of the objectives can be assessed across the Core and across all elective courses offered within a particular time period. Assessment of the Core Curriculum is thus measured in terms of the overall improvements it makes in developing all six objectives over time.

Some additional facts should also be noted. The Core Curriculum requirements are spread over four years. While advisors recognize that certain courses should be taken in freshman and sophomore years, it can happen that some students take basic courses in their junior and senior years. This is especially true for some transfer students who have not yet fulfilled lower division Core courses.

The Process

Each faculty member teaching Core Curriculum courses within the specified time interval (typically one semester) is requested to submit three exhibits of student works such as: papers, exams, projects, or other examples of graded work, which, in their judgment represent excellent work, average work, and a low pass work. These exhibits are submitted to the Office of Academic Assessment at the end of each term. Faculty members are asked to block out their own and students' names before reproducing the exhibits. These exhibits are catalogued by the objective that they are supposed to meet, as well as by their department numbers. The scored results are recorded in the same manner.

The Core Assessment Committee, composed of five faculty members, convenes in May to review the examples of student works submitted by faculty from each core course. The works are evaluated in terms of an "Assessment Score Sheet." This Score Sheet consists of 23 evaluative statements reflecting General Knowledge, Critical Thinking Skills, Writing Skills, and Values. These four categories were selected because they cut across all six objectives instead of measuring each individual objective. Each student work is evaluated and rated after committee members have established a common reference and appropriate interrater reliabilities.

The First Snapshot

During the 1995-96 academic year, 330 examples of student work drawn from more than 100 different sections of classes from 21 departments that fulfill Core requirements were evaluated.

The Core Curriculum Assessment Committee drew two major conclusions from the assessment: first, there is extensive implementation of the Core Curriculum objectives, and second, graduates do go out into their careers with a genuinely liberal arts education. This reflects the widespread commitment to the Core's place in the University's mission.

As the examples of student works were reviewed, the Committee found a serious attempt to respect the individual interests and world views of students. Simultaneous with this respect emerges a sense of how faculty members help students connect their idiosyncratic interests to the discourse of disciplines. Students must master the public language of various disciplines so that they can participate in the interdisciplinary world. Faculty, departments, and colleges work toward this end, and students' papers reflect an active—and successful—engagement with the Core Curriculum's goals. The Committee recommended that the University continue its emphasis on general knowledge, critical thinking, writing, and values through the requirements of the six Core objectives.

The Committee did find major areas where recommendations would improve delivery of the Core, especially in critical thinking and mathematical literacy. Submissions in all objectives show that components of critical thinking are often mastered without the students' synthesizing them into a fully mature critical stance. Mathematical skills were confined to mathematics courses, and the integration of this central cognitive skill must be extended across the curriculum. The assessment findings also suggested that students struggle with the concept of connecting their thinking to a larger community, a larger community with conventional modes of communication.

The Core Curriculum at the University of Detroit Mercy implicitly addresses the fundamental transformation of idiosyncratic thinking into flexible social discourse as students mature intellectually. It is not surprising that this transformation appears problematic for many of UDM students. This research documents the need for guiding such a transformation. Writing Across the Curriculum with emphasis on the Core could provide the vehicle for guiding the development of these integrative skills. The Committee recommended that these issues be reviewed and discussed by departments, colleges, and faculty.

The Second Snapshot

During the second term of the 1996-97 academic year, 249 examples of student work drawn from 76 different class sections that fulfilled Core requirements were evaluated.

The second snapshot of the Core Curriculum presents a different perspective from the first snapshot. Second snapshot results highlight curricular aspects of the Core. Descriptive data and data discussions are presented to facilitate faculty inquiry, dialogue, and continuous improvement of the core as a curriculum. In so doing, the snapshot contributes assessment results in a formative manner. Faculty members now have a tool for viewing the Core

Curriculum as a whole–a curriculum design capable of articulating courses across objectives, according to interrelated criteria categories, toward a desired outcome.

Of particular interest in the second snapshot is the indication that the Core Curriculum Assessment process is contributing to the continuous improvement of the delivery of the core. While it is neither possible nor desirable to present comparisons of data between the snapshots of the Core Curriculum as a whole, the changes made have contributed to the evolution of the core.

The dialogue and inquiry among faculty, departments, and colleges to the first snapshot laid the foundation for an effective course of action that reinforced the role the Core provides as the central context for the specialized major courses.

The Committee recommends the use of the second snapshot in a similar manner to emphasize further the role of the Core Curriculum in the University's commitment to provide students with a liberal education.

Conclusion

The Core Curriculum is a central feature of the educational process at the University of Detroit Mercy. It provides a context for the specialized major courses in the rest of the curriculum, and the assessment outcomes show that it is widely implemented; thus the University is fulfilling its commitment to a liberal arts education.

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Focus on Assessment in a Mathematics Department: General Education, Majors, and Minors

Don S. Balka
Donald E. Miller

By placing a new emphasis on assessment in its evaluation of member institutions, the North Central Association (NCA) made assessment the issue of the decade. This emphasis echoed the tone of the nation in its call for accountability at all levels. As an integral part of its institutional self-study (1993-96) before and after the NCA team visit, academic departments at Saint Mary's College began the process of developing comprehensive assessment plans, based on NCA materials and on suggestions from the college-wide NCA Steering Committee.

Several factors, unique in many ways to our college and department, made the development process a time-consuming yet rewarding experience. Saint Mary's College, a Catholic liberal arts college for women sponsored by the Sisters of the Holy Cross, requires all students to take at least a one semester course in mathematics. In addition, all students are required to complete successfully an advanced writing requirement in their major and a senior year capstone experience. Our department of eight full-time and five part-time faculty members includes pure mathematicians, applied mathematicians, and mathematics educators, all of whom teach a variety of mathematics courses as well as courses in computer science and mathematics education.

Confident that the College was doing a good job and that much of what NCA wanted to know about assessment was already in place, our NCA Steering Committee began gathering information on current practices in each academic department. This information showed a preponderance of assessment activity by departments reporting to external accrediting bodies.

With this information in hand, it seemed clear that assessment within the Mathematics Department was neither a new task nor a burden unrelated to our purposes. Instead, it required us to think about:

- what we teach
- how we teach
- what our students learn

Thus, we recognized that we were simply being asked to document something that is already an integral part of our educational culture.

Program Rationale

The first step in developing our Department assessment plan was to determine the aspects of our program that made it an important part of the liberal arts curriculum at Saint Mary's. Our program rationale provides a description of the nature of mathematics, why it is important to study mathematics, and a general statement of student expectation.

> Mathematics is a human activity which throughout history has occupied thinking people. It is an intellectual process requiring creativity, analysis, logic, decision-making, synthesis of ideas, and communication. Mathematics exists in and

for itself, but also provides the technical basis for problem solving in a wide variety of fields. The Saint Mary's graduate equipped with a strong mathematical background will be in the enviable position of being able to utilize her expertise in any area where rigorous thought and precision of results are necessary.

Goals of the Mathematics Department

In developing the rationale, faculty noted that four components were embedded in our program. They also noted that, while these components have different goals, several of them were common to all. The components were identified as:

- college general education requirements
- mathematics majors
- mathematics minors
- computer science/information science minors

To proceed with the development of our assessment plan, the Department needed to align its own goals with the College Mission Statement, keeping in mind that its offerings must be responsive to the needs of women—in learning the mathematics needed for their lives and in having the opportunity to develop their own abilities with teachers who value those abilities. In establishing these goals, the department incorporated the recommendations of the Mathematical Association of America and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and the competencies suggested in the report of the Secretary's (of Labor) Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills.

- The Department will offer a breadth of courses that will allow each student to enhance her quantitative skills, her ability to think clearly, and her problem solving skills.
- The Department will foster within each student an aesthetic appreciation for mathematical thinking.
- The Department will emphasize problem solving strategies in all courses in order to enhance each student's capacity for independent use of the content of the course.
- The Department will foster the development of each student's communication skills.
- The Department will foster the development of each student's learning skills and help her synthesize her knowledge in order to move to higher levels of independent learning.

Program Objectives and Goals for a Mathematics Major

With these departmental goals in place, the faculty were able to write program objectives for mathematics majors and minors, specifically delineating what a student should accomplish in either program. Under the umbrella of the College Mission Statement and the goals of the department, several important aspects of programs began to emerge: critical thinking and problem solving, communication, independent learning, synthesis of ideas, technology, and ethical considerations. As a result, the Goals for a Mathematics Major were developed to emphasize more specifically the areas cited above.

Assessing the Goals for a Mathematics Major

As we discussed our expectations of students during each year in the major, we noted that new levels called for new methods of assessment. Because of the vertical nature of the discipline of mathematics, a student progresses gradually toward achievement of the goals for the major. The strands, corresponding to the goals, run through all four years; however, the level of achievement changes. Each level is a preparation for the next, as the whole is a preparation for a life of learning and doing.

These methods, listed by year, are presented below. While new levels call for new methods of assessment, the earlier methods continue to be useful in evaluating progress at all levels.

First Year: In-class tests involving computation, explanation, statements of definitions and theorems, and applications.

Observation of students in class and during office hours—questions asked, questions answered, success with homework, participation in study groups, use of technology.

Regular homework assignments and discussion of these assignments.

Writing assignments at the level of reflection papers or overviews.

Second Year: In-class tests and regular homework assignments that involve more complex problems and short proofs.

Expository papers.

Third Year: Test questions that require more involved reasoning and more integration of ideas and may be in the form of take-home projects.

Homework assignments that are often a related sequence of proofs or problems that could involve the use of mathematical software. Oral presentations that require explanations of proofs or applications.

Writing assignments that require both expository and technical writing.

Group projects that require students to analyze and interpret results and to cooperate in solving problems and in preparing the group report.

Fourth Year: Observation of student preparation, presentations, and peer interaction while students teach new mathematics to each other.

Student critiques of presentations.

Assessing the Mathematics Programs

In addition to assessing student achievement, the department has engaged itself in many forms of self-assessment. As we began to focus on this part of the NCA assessment plan, we were able to enumerate a variety of items that gave us information about our mathematics programs.

- student readiness for subsequent courses and national standardized examinations
- comments by students on course surveys
- alumnae success in employment or graduate school
- bi-annual "After Math" presentations in which alumnae return to tell majors what to expect in their careers and how a math major from Saint Mary's helped them
- comparisons with mathematics programs at other colleges, national reform movements, accreditation reviews
- department discussions concerning goals of program, needs of majors, and ability to meet these needs

The General Education Component of the Mathematics Department

The general education program set forth in the Mission Statement of the College guides the Department in its course offerings for this component. As a result of study within this area, a student will have met the following goals:

- The student will be offered a breadth of courses, each of which will allow her to enhance her quantitative skills, her ability to think clearly, and her problem solving skills.
- The student will develop her capacity for independent use of the course content through emphasis on problem solving strategies.
- The student will be able to communicate her ideas and work with enhanced clarity and precision.
- The student will enhance her learning skills, enabling her to synthesize her knowledge in preparation for moving to higher levels of independent learning.

These goals are implemented through a cadre of courses designed to meet the student's needs and level of readiness. Continuance in these courses requires successful performance on a departmental proficiency test. This test is used to assess whether or not a student has the requisite knowledge to benefit from the course. We have begun an item analysis of the test results in order to identify common areas of deficiencies that we may need to address.

Conclusion

The ongoing NCA self-study has provided the Mathematics Department with an opportunity to write, expand, revise, and clarify evaluation procedures within our discipline. Faculty found, in many cases, that we were already doing an excellent job of assessing student achievement and of assessing our program. Thus, in developing our plan, we were able to operate from a position of strength and establish it using the following prioritized list:

- It must meet the requirements of NCA.
- It should minimize administrative effort.
- It should provide the Department with timely and useful information on the effectiveness of its programs.

Establishing and initiating the implementation of our assessment plan has been a challenging experience. We believe our efforts have resulted in a document that addresses the concerns cited above.

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Portfolios: The Journey Towards Improving Student Learning

Colleen Altaffer Smith
Ellen Ventura

Although portfolios are widely utilized in higher education assessment programs across the United States, developing a systematic approach to portfolio assessment can be a difficult and frustrating task. On the other hand, this task can be undertaken as an interesting journey that leads towards improving student learning. As Ewens (1990) reminds us, "It was Plato, still near to the Greek origins of Western culture, who first called attention to the revelatory power of wonder as the originary source of human thinking." (p. 7) This wonder is the driving force behind the search for understanding that is fundamental to all aspects of assessment of student learning. This wonder is what encouraged Western Wyoming Community College to embark on a journey that has no definite path. A desire to learn from others combined with the willingness to experiment has allowed us to make progress and encouraged us that the journey is worthwhile. Lendley C. Black (1993) proclaims that "portfolios, perhaps more than any other type of assessment tool, provide very rich information that can lead directly to the betterment of academic programs." (p. 139) We believe him.

Western Wyoming Community College

WWCC, the fifth of seven community colleges in Wyoming, was established in the Fall of 1959. Student numbers have increased over the years from 40 in 1959 to more than 6,000 in 1994. These figures include all students of varying ages and interests, enrolled in the credit, non-credit, and extension programs. The number of FTE (full-time equivalent) students has increased to more than 2,000. WWCC is an open door institution, and all residents over the age of sixteen can be admitted to the College. All students working toward a degree are required to show evidence of high school graduation or successful completion of the GED examination.

WWCC Statement of Philosophy

Western Wyoming Community College is a public institution whose fundamental purpose is to provide an education of high quality to both traditional and nontraditional students at all stages of life.

Recognizing that teaching is central to its mission, the College seeks to foster an environment in which students committed to learning and a faculty dedicated to teaching interact closely in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Committed to quality and success, the College encourages flexibility and innovation in its curriculum and instruction. As a comprehensive community college, Western, through its curriculum, aims to develop in all students a breadth of perspective, a capacity to think both critically and creatively, and an understanding of the role of values in thought and action.

Recognizing also that the college experience will influence the social, emotional, and physical growth of each individual student, Western offers student support services that foster development and promote growth and change. These services complement the College's focus on teaching and assist the faculty in helping students persist in their educational goals.

Western Wyoming Community College's primary service area is the community of southwest Wyoming. As a community college keenly aware of "community" in its name, the College seeks to apply its resources to enrich cultural life, to enhance the awareness of the community's unique heritage and environment, and to develop a consistent dialogue and interaction with local business and industry. In addition to providing a formal curriculum, the College sponsors such activities as conferences, workshops, lectures, and artistic performances.

WWCC Educational Assumptions: Our Beliefs About Teaching and Learning

The faculty and staff at WWCC have consolidated their beliefs about teaching and learning in order to develop a blending of their educational assumptions.

Teaching and learning are dynamic and require constant adjustment. Teaching and learning are dynamic and require flexibility in methods and styles. Students learn at different rates and there are different learning styles. All learning should be celebrated. Teaching and learning require commitment and work from the teacher and the student; the responsibility should be shared. Education should be interactive: learning is doing. Cross-curricular skills should be reinforced in all classes, and teacher and student both need self-assessment. It is important to communicate the evaluation criteria consistently over time to improve teaching and learning.

WWCC Goals for Student Success

WWCC has identified five major goals for student success in order to assist students in developing abilities that will help prepare them to succeed in the world today and to meet the challenges of the future. These goals are addressed in courses across the curriculum at WWCC, and methods of instruction and assessment are varied. As students pursue their education at WWCC their work demonstrates these abilities within various courses and contexts of college life.

◇ **Communicate competently**

At Western Wyoming Community College the ability to communicate competently requires that students express ideas clearly and effectively and receive meaning and interpret ideas through various modes of communication. Although speaking, writing, reading, and listening are considered primary modes of communication, these abilities are not enough to communicate effectively in the world today. These skills must be utilized along with other competencies that play a major role in communication as students learn to adjust to the needs of audiences. Computer skills, interpersonal communication skills, group communication skills, and leadership skills are all important to students' professional careers as well as their personal lives. Being able to interpret and produce ideas through various media, including visual graphics and aural commentaries, are also vital to communication today. Self-expression through the arts is a profound means of communication that can affect students throughout their lives.

◇ **Retrieve information**

The ability to retrieve information is especially important in the world today where the vast amount of knowledge in any discipline is impossible to learn and keep within the human memory. The ability to retrieve information allows students to locate the material necessary to help them solve problems in their professional and personal lives. Western Wyoming Community College considers this ability to be especially meaningful for the two-year college student. Usually, retrieving information is part of a problem-solving continuum. Our faculty, however, considered this skill to be so critical for all two-year college students that they designated it as a separate goal. Learning to utilize the library effectively can be a new experience for many students, and it is critically important for information retrieval. Computer usage is essential, just as networking and learning to seek out the expert are necessary skills for students learning how to search for information.

◇ **See issues from multiple perspectives**

At Western Wyoming Community College students are encouraged to see issues from multiple perspectives and to think about consequences. Global views of work, people, and life in a political, historical, and social context enable students to make decisions and understand consequences. An understanding of professional ethics and environmental consequences enables students to become productive members of the community and the world. Many colleges are discussing the issue of "diversity," and hence have a global or non-Western course requirement. Our faculty, however, wanted a broader concept; the idea of seeing any issue from multiple perspectives, not necessarily only from a non-Western or global perspective. Seeing issues from multiple perspectives indicates an understanding and appreciation of diversity.

- **Solve problems**

  At Western Wyoming Community College the ability to solve problems indicates that students understand and apply specific methods for solving problems within various contexts and disciplines. Students must first be able to identify and clearly define the problem in question. A conceptual understanding of ideas and information allows students to make connections and seek a better understanding through critical thinking skills. Problem solving requires students to be able to analyze and interpret various kinds of data including quantitative and qualitative, objective and subjective information. The ability to sort and organize information, make decisions, and draw conclusions are all necessary ingredients to solving problems.

- **Develop life skills**

  Western Wyoming Community College emphasizes the ability to develop life skills as being necessary to all students. The ability to be responsible and take control of their lives is demonstrated as students learn to deal with bureaucracy, make decisions, and follow through. Establishing life goals, educational goals, and career goals is an important part of developing life skills. Students are taught that they have both rights *and* responsibilities and that they are ultimately responsible for their choices. Life-long wellness skills, where students learn to deal effectively with stress and demonstrate an understanding of how to develop as healthy human beings both physically and emotionally, are vital aspects of the education received at Western, as is appreciating life through arts, culture, recreation, and leisure.

WWCC Assessment Team

The Assessment Team is a standing committee that has the goal of helping to cultivate and advocate assessment on the curriculum level in a way that will be meaningful for our students and faculty. The Team is a task-oriented group that works with our Goals for Student Success to define criteria and develop or locate assessment instruments for each goal. All meetings of this group are open, and frequently interested individuals participate on a "drop-in" basis. The focus is on improving student learning through the assessment of the Goals for Student Success. At times, ad hoc subcommittees are formed to focus on a single objective. The Assessment Team is responsible for regular and thorough follow-up on assessment of the Goals for Student Success. The Team's goals for the following year are established according to information gathered on areas needing improvement.

Developing the Portfolio Class

The Assessment Team encouraged portfolio assessment as one way to provide information concerning our Goals for Student Success. During the 1996-97 school year a class titled "Preparing an Academic Portfolio" was developed and taught as a collaborative endeavor. This initial experience with the course proved to be valuable for the students and the College. One of the unique attributes of the course is that it served a dual purpose: (1) to provide students with the opportunity to prepare an academic portfolio that may help them transfer to another college or gain employment, and (2) to provide students with the opportunity to work with a variety of professionals to determine their abilities to demonstrate the WWCC Goals for Student Success as a measure of student learning. The students benefited by leaving the course with well-prepared portfolios, and the College benefited by gathering information in order to improve student learning.

The course was designed as a capstone experience that allowed us to assess work that students had accomplished previously as well as in-class demonstrations of many of the goals. For instance, students put writing samples that had been assessed in various classes in their portfolios; they also wrote essays in the portfolio class. They gave presentations and did group projects in the portfolio class. These projects were video-taped, and students then had the opportunity to complete self-assessments in these areas as well. There were many other activities in the course—all designed to help assess the Goals for Student Success. The course was a cumulative experience as a representation of students' work. Not only did we gather information about student learning, but we also found we had a great deal to learn about Portfolio Assessment.

With all of the work that had been put into the development of the course, we believed that we were prepared for this exciting new adventure. The following list of materials was ready for the students, along with a healthy enthusiasm for this new course:

- Course outline detailing purpose of the course, methods of assessment, etc.

- Portfolio requirements listed under each of the five Goals for Student Success
  - communicate competently
  - retrieve information
  - see issues from multiple perspectives
  - solve problems
  - develop life skills
- Daily schedule of class activities and assignments
- Assessment documents prepared by WWCC for:
  - writing across the curriculum
  - utilizing the library
  - speaking in groups
  - presentational speaking
  - interviewing skills

Throughout the course students collected the artifacts for their portfolios and participated in the capstone activities. We also asked their input on the process and the requirements throughout the semester. After the portfolios were completed and the students had concluded all of their activities and presentations, we were excited to see what we would learn.

The Assessment Team scheduled a day to begin the process of reading through all of the portfolios. We discovered a wealth of information and were eager to determine what it all meant. That is when we found we did not know how to determine what it all meant. Our first recommendation was that we all needed training in how to assess portfolios. Although we were able to articulate some very important findings for our faculty and College community as a whole, we knew we did not have an appropriate system for scoring the portfolios.

Conclusion

Are portfolios the answer to understanding everything we need to know to help us improve student learning? We believe that portfolios are just one important part of the puzzle. We have found that portfolios provide us with information that could not be gained through other means of assessment, and yet they do not answer all of our questions. We were not experts when we entered into portfolio assessment, and we are not experts now. Portfolios were utilized in various disciplines across campus, but we were "brand new" at utilizing portfolios to assess our goals across the curriculum. Our NCA staff liaison visited our campus to give us feedback on the progress of our Assessment Plan. This visit was extremely productive in many ways:

- It helped renew enthusiasm for Assessment of Student Learning—gave us a great deal of positive feedback.
- It gave specific ideas of how to improve as well as possibilities to consider for the future.
- It left the faculty with the understanding that NCA wants us to succeed and will do anything they can to help us.

Since that visit, we have accomplished a great deal. Protocols for the Portfolio class have been more clearly delineated. We have created rubrics for scoring the portfolios so that we can compile our findings with a systematic process. We have worked collaboratively to revise and improve the course, and faculty and students are enthusiastic about the many opportunities it provides.

Prus and Johnson (1994) suggest a disadvantage of portfolios may be that "Management of the collection and grading process, including the establishment of reliable and valid grading criteria, is likely to be challenging." (p. 81) This is very true, and yet many advantages stated by Prus and Johnson (1994) make this challenge extremely worthwhile. Out of the ten advantages they listed, we have found five to be most significant to us:

- Multiple components of a curriculum can be measured (such as writing, critical thinking, and research skills) at the same time.
- The process of reviewing and grading portfolios provides an excellent opportunity for faculty exchange and development, discussion of curriculum goals and objectives, review of grading criteria, and program feedback.
- There is greater faculty control over interpretation and use of results.
- Results are more likely to be meaningful at all levels (the individual student, program, or institution) and can be used for diagnostic and prescriptive purposes as well.
- The process increases student participation (selection, revision, and evaluation) in the assessment process. (p. 81)

That primordial experience of wonder described by Plato encouraged us to experiment with portfolios as part of our journey towards improving student learning. We have learned a great deal, and the journey continues.

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Tools for Individual Self-Study and Ongoing Improvement: Peer Review and Classroom Assessment

Karla Brown

Last year at the North Central Association's Annual Meeting, I heard a presenter remark that, in regard to the assessment of student academic achievement, North Central doesn't so much care how you are doing as an institution as they do that you know how you are doing and that you are taking steps to improve on how you are doing. That statement struck a chord with me because that is how we have tried to shape and define assessment at my institution. To define it as such means taking on an "improvement" rather than an "accountability" mindset, I believe. An improvement mindset also embodies a perspective similar to the requirements of North Central's self-study process: rather than meeting an external set of guidelines and requirements, North Central asks institutions to define for themselves the type of institution they are and the degree to which they can answer with confidence the five questions posed in the self-study process. The entire self-study process is therefore built on a base of self-reflection, self-analysis, and self-improvement.

When Hawkeye Community College went through the process in 1993-1995, I served on the Steering Committee and co-chaired the Criterion Three subcommittee charged with designing a plan for the assessment of student academic achievement. Initially other Steering Committee members and I focused heavily on the final product—the report we would submit to North Central. At some point during the process, however, I realized that the assessment plan and our NCA report were not the real point—that such final products were only the evidence and the spur to prompt the real essence, which was the learning about ourselves that would occur in the process of writing them.

As a writing teacher, I try to help my students approach writing with much the same attitude. I emphasize the up-front process as almost more important than the specific writing they produce as a result. I make the comparison that when learning to play the piano, the specific songs the music teacher assigns are of little consequence; from trying to learn how to play them, the real goal of being able to play the piano is reached. It is often difficult, however, to get students to focus on the "getting there" rather than on the "destination."

Two initiatives on my campus that have arisen from efforts of both the Assessment Committee and the newly formed Teaching and Learning Center are the use of the classroom assessment approach articulated by Pat Cross and Tom Angelo and the process of peer review of teaching. Engaging in the use of classroom assessment and the process of peer review can promote the type of self-reflection and self-improvement on the level of the individual teacher that the North Central self-study process prompts on the institutional level. Like the self-study process, its real value lies in the process itself far more than in any "final products" it produces.

I have taught a one-credit-hour class in the Angelo/Cross classroom assessment approach in conjunction with a local university in addition to doing multiple workshops, and I have also taken a class in peer review twice, once for credit and the second time just for my enjoyment and personal growth. I am always amazed at how engaging in either or both processes results in ongoing learning even if you have done them before. The other aspect of reviewing classroom assessment data or participating in peer review that continues to intrigue me is how much you can learn even as a seasoned teacher—how much broader and in-focus your lens on the classroom becomes.

An ongoing challenge for us at Hawkeye and for the profession at large is how to broaden and deepen the involvement in such activities. Typically our classes have had about eight teacher/students, the minimum required to run the class through the university for credit. Many of the same people have taken classes in both classroom assessment and peer review; and, as might be expected, they are some of the best and most dedicated to teaching and to working to improve as teachers. It therefore becomes a situation where "the rich get richer"; we need to find ways to spread the word and the enthusiasm so that more people will stretch themselves to learn and grow as teachers.

I believe that the best teachers are not content to rest on their laurels but remain engaged in the type of lifelong learning that we profess to students–that such teachers always believe they can get better. Rather than recycling lectures and lesson plans year after year, they continue to search for ways to involve students more in their own learning. Donald Schon calls this becoming a "reflective practitioner," Ernest Boyer refers to it as "the scholarship of teaching," Lee Shulman articulates it as the "vision of the knowing that informs good teaching," and past AAHE President Russell Edgerton calls for "a culture of professional inquiry about good teaching." At Hawkeye, in the faculty inservice led by the Assessment Committee this last fall, we used the title of "Creating a Culture of Teaching and Learning."

This session will provide an introduction to classroom assessment techniques for those unfamiliar with the approach, to the types of peer review that we engaged in, and to the value of both processes to further reflection and improvement in teaching. Institutions that do not yet have initiatives to promote either activity may be particularly interested, as might faculty who have not yet tried either approach. The overall goal is to promote both classroom assessment and peer review as activities that, in the spirit of the North Central Association self-study process, can enlarge self-knowledge and provide direction for positive change. Ultimately such activities can help lead to quality-by-design (an improvement mindset) rather than quality-by-inspection (an accountability mindset).

Classroom assessment and peer review are designed to acknowledge what's right in higher education and then work to enhance it. As Pat Cross so aptly puts it, "In the final analysis, classroom teachers are the linchpins of educational reform. The quality of student learning is inevitably linked to the quality of classroom teaching…if improvement of student learning is the goal, classroom teachers must be the means."

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Ten Focus Areas for Successful Classroom Teaching/Learning and the Assessment Program at Triton College

A Handbook For Successful Assessment of Classroom Teaching/Learning

Ellen O'Connell

Triton College is a suburban community college approximately ten miles west of Chicago. As a result of the last North Central Association accreditation action, Triton College was required to design and implement a new type of assessment, that of classroom teaching/learning. This type of assessment differs from measuring the number of graduates, the average ACT, the number of A's, B's, C's, or the like. It is clearly separate from institutional effectiveness. Instead, it is a program to build continuous quality improvement into every classroom setting. Regardless of how good an academic area may seem, there is always room for improvement. Not every student is going to have a successful experience every time.

The present structure of classroom teaching/learning assessment involves a dynamic committee composed of faculty and administrators who actively plan, review, and advise fellow faculty members and academic departments in the fulfillment of classroom assessment responsibilities. The present format of this type of classroom teaching/learning assessment is a result of several revisions designed to make it more effective with each modification. During the first year of implementation in 1994, Triton College's Classroom Assessment Plan won the Illinois Award for Excellence and Accountability. This presentation focuses on selected activities that have a positive impact on the assessment process.

1. **Assessment committee.** Selection of the committee is, by far, one of the most important aspects of a successful classroom teaching/learning assessment program. Committee members must be those who are willing to work, have a vested interest, are well respected by their peers, and have a true understanding of the assessment process. Committee membership must represent every aspect of the academic campus: transfer, health careers, and technology. It is from this group of people that the activities, direction, timetable, training, and mentoring will occur. The committee must be faculty-driven. That is, it must be primarily faculty membership with additional membership by academic administrators. One group cannot function without the other, but the whole faculty group must see that it is their own peers who are actively pursuing classroom teaching/learning assessment.

   The assessment committee must first determine the mission of the committee, the goals and objectives, and the mode of communication to the rest of the faculty. Any good assessment must flow from the mission of the college, the goals of general education, program goals, course goals, and single class goals. All of these areas are eligible for classroom assessment. Selection of an objective to be assessed will help determine the type of assessment tool used. The committee must communicate to the faculty as a whole that each department has the responsibility and the know-how to determine those aspects of teaching/learning that should be assessed to ensure that each area is fulfilling its mission to the college and the community. The most important aspect to remember is that each area decides what is best for itself. It is not possible to have one objective or assessment tool that will suffice for all. Varied methods of assessment and multiple goals assessed can only enhance the assessment process.

2. **The assessment workbook/handbook.** Selected academic areas' assessment plans and results need to be provided as models of classroom teaching/learning assessment. Faculty also indicated that they would like a guide to composing the assessment plan and developing their own department's philosophy regarding assessment. Most academic areas need only a little direction before they are ready to take on the assessment task themselves. Generally the dissemination of samples to the faculty at large can be accomplished by piloting assessment plans in the academic areas of the people on the committee.

   At Triton, each piloting academic area specified an objective to be assessed (program, course, or class) and a mode of assessment, gathered data, produced a document of results, and implemented a feedback component as a result of assessment. Several varied models were selected, published, and shared college-wide. It is important to have models that are varied and from a cross-section of the academic areas. As the assessment process matures, models are selected from areas that, while not represented by a faculty member on the committee, clearly represent a good sample and understanding of the assessment process. At Triton College, samples of sound assessment are now being published in the bi-monthly newsletter. Additionally, a workbook/handbook has been established so that each faculty member will have a guide in hand.

3. **On-campus assessment newsletter.** A newsletter should be established as a regular mode of communication. It can be published bi-monthly and written by Assessment Committee members or anyone else able to make a contribution. The newsletter highlights ongoing activities, new techniques, modified forms, deadlines, and unique assessment on campus.

4. **Focus groups.** Each year/semester faculty should be asked to participate in a focus group to help improve the assessment process. Topics could range from the philosophy of classroom assessment, to paperwork involved, to deadlines, and to actual assessment activities. This type of focus group feedback can be very instrumental in the constant improvement and modification of the assessment process.

5. **Suggestions for classroom assessment techniques adapted from the Cross/Angelo works** *(Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers* 1993). Selected editions of the on-campus assessment newsletter provide a summary of new classroom assessment techniques selected from the Cross/Angelo publication. The purpose of these bi-monthly publications is to acquaint faculty with varied and manageable assessment activities. Faculty are urged to pilot these techniques and share their experiences with their colleagues.

6. **Collaboration with other community colleges.** Periodically the Assessment Committee representatives meet with members from adjoining community college districts to share ideas and tackle common problems.

7. **Host of a local Assessment Fair in Fall 1996 and Fall 1997.** In November of 1996, Triton hosted an Assessment Fair that was attended by more than 70 colleagues from all the local colleges. Faculty members and administrators from numerous colleges made presentations featuring techniques and activities used and special sessions on the NCA's requirements. Attendance was open to any local college faculty member or administrator. Due to the overwhelming positive comments, a second larger fair was held in Fall 1997.

8. **Attendance by key people at appropriate workshops.** Faculty members and administrators on the Assessment Committee are urged to attend conferences regarding assessment. Expenses are paid by the college. Additionally, faculty members are encouraged to present quality assessment ideas at conferences and workshops. These trips are also funded by the college.

9. **Creation of an in-house yearly publication of all classroom assessment in progress or completed.** More than 60 academic areas document their assessment plans for the upcoming year, their past year's assessment results, modifications to their curricula, and general results. Each of these reports is included in a bound copy of assessment that is disseminated campus-wide. The purpose of this shared document is to highlight the varied activities on campus as well as provide a seed for future ideas. It is anticipated that the classroom teaching/learning assessment process will become better, more manageable, and more worthwhile as it matures. Academic areas can compare their activities with their college colleagues, adopt ideas, and provide constructive input for future assessment plans.

10. **Troubleshooting and overcoming faculty resistance.** Regardless of how successful something appears to be on paper, it does not always translate to victory in practice. Several of the pitfalls of managing and implementing

an assessment plan are regularly addressed. The plan itself is in a constant state of flux—appropriate for any continuous quality improvement process.

Overcoming faculty resistance. Several personal and tactful techniques ensure the greatest level of participation in classroom teaching/learning assessment. Faculty need to be assured that this is not a practice of teacher evaluation. Once this has been accomplished, real assessment can take place. So often faculty discuss among themselves those aspects of teaching/learning that could be improved. The assessment process provides an organized and documented format for a practice that has been going on informally for decades. While faculty differ from discipline to discipline, there are sufficient commonalities that can be tapped to bring out the best in the assessment process.

Each of these ten aspects is a small component of the complete management and implementation of the assessment process. The classroom teaching/learning assessment continues to be a work in progress as is any continuous quality improvement. The object of the process is to determine what can make programs, instruction, and learning better than they are.

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Learning Outcomes: The Foundations of Assessment and Faculty Development

Susan T. Rydell
Leah S. Harvey

A commitment to specified learning outcomes has been a hallmark of Metropolitan State University since it was established in 1972. Since the university community is well-versed in identifying and measuring learning outcomes, this commitment provided a strong base for developing and implementing the NCA assessment plan. In developing the plan, the NCA Assessment Committee, consisting of university faculty and staff, looked to outcomes that had been set by a Minnesota State University Blue Ribbon Commission, and modified those to reflect outcomes valued by the university. Those outcomes are:

- ◇ **Preparedness.** Each entering student will have met the university's admission standards and will have completed a diagnostic assessment procedure, identified educational strengths and deficiencies, and addressed any deficiencies.
- ◇ **Higher order thinking.** Students will demonstrate higher order thinking in a variety of ways throughout the educational process and will complete a final integrating experience.
- ◇ **Global understanding.** Students will demonstrate progress toward acquisition of a global perspective through international study or the study of foreign language and culture, and will demonstrate the ability to articulate the interrelationships of world economics, environment, geography, history, politics, religion, and the arts.
- ◇ **Multicultural perspective.** Students will demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and values gained by the study of those groups in the United States oppressed by virtue of race, gender, and class by including learning related to multiculturalism as part of their degree program learning experiences and by working together in diverse learning communities toward shared goals.
- ◇ **Scientific and quantitative literacy.** Students will demonstrate quantitative and scientific literacy, including an understanding of the transforming role of technology in world society.
- ◇ **Readiness for work and career.** Students will demonstrate readiness for a chosen vocation by integrating theoretical and practical learning in an appropriate setting, depending upon educational goals and previous experiences.
- ◇ **Responsible citizenship in a democracy.** Students will demonstrate an understanding of citizen interdependence and the importance of citizen involvement in a democracy through successful completion of a community service, citizen participation, or social action project. Additionally, students should develop the ability to articulate the standards of ethical behavior expected of them and of others in their professional, public, and personal lives.
- ◇ **Communication.** Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively through a variety of written, oral, and nonverbal means with individuals and in groups.
- ◇ **Discipline knowledge.** Students should demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a specific discipline or subject area. This might include interdisciplinary knowledge.

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These general learning outcomes are called "university outcomes" or "quality indicators," reflecting what our institution believes to be the result of a quality education. Since Metropolitan State University is an urban institution offering liberal arts and professional baccalaureate and master's degree programs, these quality indicators are consistent with the university's mission; and they provide a context for teaching and student learning assessments in general education, majors, and graduate programs.

University Outcomes Related to Course Outcomes

Because this framework is congruent with values long held by the university, it was not difficult to garner faculty support for using those outcomes in teaching. Instructors have always been expected to identify learning outcomes for their courses and other learning opportunities, and those outcomes are included on all syllabi. Thus, this plan only required relating those course learning outcomes to the more general university learning outcomes or quality indicators listed above. To facilitate the process, faculty developed written materials and held training workshops over a six-month period as part of the university's faculty development program. In most cases, instructors articulated five to seven of the most important learning outcomes for their course offerings, along with the measurement techniques to be used, and identified the quality indicators that those outcomes addressed.

At the end of each course, instructors evaluate student progress relative to each of the learning outcomes they had identified. They rate each student for each outcome on a scale of excellent, good, adequate, partially adequate, inadequate.

Configurations and Applications of Assessment Data

The faculty ratings of student learning outcomes described above provide the data to be used as the basis for assessment. The course outcomes and ratings become part of a student's academic record, while the more general quality indicators and ratings associated with them become part of the university's computerized assessment data base. The computerized information can be summarized in many different ways. For example, it is possible to look at how many courses in a specific department include global understanding as a learning outcome, and how well students did relative to that outcome; the university can analyze general education courses with regard to how well they address the quality indicators; faculty can review the education of individual students to evaluate student education as it relates to those outcomes.

At the present time, the following summaries of computerized information have been distributed to academic departments for their review and discussion:

- university-wide totals for university quality indicators showing totals of faculty ratings of student performance across the university
- learning outcomes for each academic department showing a comparison of totals of faculty ratings in each department
- learning outcome ratings within a particular academic department
- individual course outcomes for courses within a particular academic department
- instructor ratings of individual student performance on each learning outcome within a course (for each course within a particular department)

Various data configurations will provide useful information to suggest programmatic changes to enhance student learning. Departments will be able to see those areas that are being adequately addressed in their courses as well as those that are not. The university will be able to adjust the general education curriculum if it appears that students are completing the curriculum without gaining knowledge in the designated areas. This information is not intended to be the only information used in assessment; rather, it might well suggest that additional evaluative information is needed for program assessment.

It is too soon to know what changes might be made on the basis of this information. However, faculty are interested in the data and have begun including more assessment issues in faculty development workshops and retreats.

At Metropolitan State University we will also be able to use this information to establish a student portfolio. This portfolio is made up of the learning outcomes for each course offering and the evaluation of the student on that outcome. This differs from the assessment data base, which includes the quality indicators, but not the unique outcomes related to every course.

Application of Model at Other Institutions

This approach can be implemented easily at any institution. It requires:

- articulating general learning outcomes; these could be related to graduation or general education requirements
- relating course learning outcomes to those overall outcomes
- giving faculty a straightforward way to rate students relative to their course outcomes
- summarizing the information in ways that are useful to faculty and administrators. Although Metro State has included this as part of the student record system, it could also be done using any number of basic statistical packages, such as SPSS

This approach to outcomes assessment has the advantage that it is based on good teaching practice. It is predicated on the assumption that any good teaching/learning process begins with identifying clear, attainable, and measurable learning outcomes.

Thus, working with faculty to identify outcomes and assess student progress on these outcomes has been a worthwhile faculty activity, providing the foundation for the university's assessment program.

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Using the Assessment EXPO to Communicate Assessment Successes to Faculty and Staff

Donald H. Bennion
Stewart D. Work

At Eastern Michigan University, formal assessment plans have existed for the past four years; plans exist for each academic department and for general education. In addition, the Colleges of Business and Health and Human Services have plans for the common learnings expected in their colleges. Within the EMU Assessment Plan, each program area is required to:

- state the *skills* and *concepts* that all students should have mastered by the time they complete the program
- identify the methods that will be used to assess the attainment of these skills and concepts
- show how the resulting assessment has been used to revise the program and enhance the learning of future students

As assessment plans developed throughout EMU, it was apparent that many good ideas emerged from which faculty in other departments could learn. To facilitate the communication of these assessment activities throughout the university, a series of sessions sponsored by the EMU Faculty Center for Instructional Excellence were organized and attended by moderate (average attendance 22) numbers of faculty. To enhance further this effort to communicate assessment more effectively across campus a set of *Assessment Information Papers* and a "Questions and Answers about Assessment" brochure were developed and distributed widely across the organization. To guarantee that the issue of academic assessment was consistently before the faculty and staff, in September 1993, EMU began publishing a monthly one page (front and back newsletter entitled *Assessment Matters.*

In 1995, the Director of Academic Assessment decided that the communication of successful academic assessment activities could be communicated further if faculty at EMU could see displays of these successful methods, and in some cases, through interactive displays, see the methods in action. Therefore, it was decided to hold an annual assessment EXPO.

A pilot, limited EXPO was held in February 1996 with the Basic Studies (general education) Committee and 17 academic departments offering displays. All EMU faculty and staff were invited to attend.

On October 28, 1996, a full scale EXPO took place in the Student Center Ballroom with all 35 academic departments, as well as the Basic Studies program, offering displays. There were also college-wide displays by Business and Health and Human Services. In addition to EMU faculty and staff, personnel from ten area community colleges were invited to attend the EXPO.

The third EXPO, held on March 6, 1998, expanded the displays into both the Ballroom and Guild Hall, another large room adjacent to the Ballroom. Each display showed the goals of the program, the assessment methods employed, the results of the assessment, and the program changes that occurred as a result of the assessment. Each poster display was accompanied by handout material on the assessment activities, and a member of the departmental faculty was at each display to answer questions and develop discussion with visitors from other EMU departments and from 30 invited two- and four-year colleges and universities in Michigan and northern Ohio.

Through the presentation at the 103rd NCA Annual Meeting we will show:

- the goals of the EXPO
- a diagram of the rooms where the 1998 EXPO was held
- copies of correspondence to faculty asking them to participate
- copies of correspondence to EMU faculty and staff inviting them to attend
- copies of correspondence to community college and baccalaureate colleges and universities concerning how they benefited from the EXPO
- photos of some of the displays
- comments from faculty and staff from two- and four-year colleges and universities concerning how they benefited from the EXPO
- lessons learned and changes that will be made for EXPO 1999

We believe that this presentation will provide an effective prescription for any college or university wishing to use an assessment expo to communicate assessment success to colleagues within the institution or to those at other colleges or universities.

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Assessment Day: Every Which Way But Out

Judith Dallinger
Virginia Helm
M. David Beveridge

Assessment of student learning at Western Illinois University has been officially underway since 1992, when NCA approved the WIU Plan for Assessment of Student Learning. Assessment has developed into a multifaceted process that is carried out on several levels (classroom, department, college, and university-wide) and incorporates a multitude of techniques. Assessment Day is a relatively new and successful tool in the university's assessment process.

The plan for designating an Assessment Day each academic semester was developed by the faculty Council on Assessment of Student Learning, endorsed by the university Faculty Senate, and approved by the President. Implemented beginning in the Fall 1997 semester, it provides for the following.

- Cancellation of all classes for the day (prior to 4:00 p.m.)
- Administration of the university writing exam
- Use of the instructional time for additional assessment activities involving all faculty and as many students as possible

Activities that Take Place on Assessment Day

☐ **University-wide**

All students are required to take the University Enhanced Writing Examination, which incorporates the CAAP test from ACT and a written essay. Students complete three of the CAAP tests (writing, mathematics, and one selected by their major department). Students must pass the writing exam and must complete the additional tests. The tests are given to students who are at the rising junior level or beyond but have not already successfully passed the writing exam. Students are automatically registered for the exam.

Passing the university writing exam has been a graduation requirement at the university for more than 20 years. It was previously administered on a Saturday morning early in each semester, but is now administered on the morning of Assessment Day. Prior to designating an Assessment Day, the student non-attendance rate for taking the exam had been rising, recently reaching nearly 30%-40%. Reducing that percentage was one of the primary reasons for the creation of Assessment Day. Since its implementation, non-attendance rates have been at approximately 15% for the three semesters. The institution continues to focus attention on this problem.

☐ **Department major assessment activities**

Each department is expected to use Assessment Day for activities related to student assessment and/or faculty work on assessment, curriculum, or related issues. Departments have developed a number of different ways to take advantage of this time when both faculty and students are available. Some of the specific uses by departments over the three semesters in which we have held Assessment Day are listed below.

- **Test and/or questionnaire administration.** Approximately 30% of the university's 36 departments have administered tests and/or questionnaires to students on Assessment Day.
  - Standardized content tests (such as ETS field tests, ACAT tests, and tests developed by professional associations) in majors were given to students in Accountancy, Agriculture, Biology, Economics, English, Industrial Education, Marketing, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology.
  - Locally developed content tests were given to students in Biology, Chemistry, Communication, Journalism, Law Enforcement, Management, and Mathematics and Psychology.
  - Skills tests (both locally developed and standardized) were administered to students in Bilingual Education, Foreign Languages, Music, and Physical Education.
  - Attitudinal surveys were given to students majoring in Communication, Family and Consumer Sciences, Health, History, and Finance.
  - Majors in Information Management prepared and presented information management cases to faculty.
- **Department faculty meetings.** Many departments (ranging from approximately 33% on the first Assessment Day to approximately 85% on the most recent Assessment Day) held departmental or committee meetings for various assessment-related purposes.
  - Planning for specific data collection, using a standardized change focused format, was conducted by faculty in Accountancy, Agriculture, Chemistry, Computer Science, Economics, Educational Administration, Elementary Education, Health Education and Promotion, Management, Physics, Political Science, Psychology, and Special Education.
  - Assessment plans were adapted for AACSB accreditation by Accountancy and Economics.
  - Development and revision of graduate assessment plans (initiated at the university in 1996) occurred on Assessment Day in Counselor Education, Elementary Education, Health Education, Instructional Technology, Psychology, Recreation, and Special Education.
  - General education assessment was discussed by faculty in both Art and Philosophy.
  - Assessment data were analyzed: Broadcasting and Communication Sciences and Disorders faculty examined attitudinal survey data, and English faculty rated student written essays.
  - Other topics discussed at meetings included curricular revision, instrument development and revision, portfolio development, and embedding assessment in coursework.
- **Student-faculty exchange.** Approximately 15% of the departments held focus groups or met with students.
  - Communication, Health Education, History, Law Enforcement, Marketing and Social Work held student focus groups.
  - Economics, English, Family and Consumer Sciences, History, Mathematics, and Sociology hosted meals for faculty and students.
  - Economics, Industrial Education, and Psychology met with majors to discuss aspects of their major education.
  - Theatre conducted individual reviews of each sophomore and junior student major.

Considerations for Designating an Assessment Day

- Support must come from the top! Planning and commitment must come up from the bottom.
- Pre-plan: both for logistics and to ensure appropriate use of the time.

- Include students in activities.
- Make Assessment Day academic, not a "day off."

Successes of Our Assessment Day

- Improved attendance for the university writing examination.
- Increased opportunity for assessment activities.
- Highlighted the importance of assessment in university functioning.

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Chapter 10

The Role of Institutional Planning in Collaboration and Self-Study

THE Collaborative Imperative

103rd Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
March 28-31, 1998 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

The Community's College: A Collaborative Look at Planning Issues

Julie Weissman
Jean V. Kartje
Gretchen J. Naff

The College of Lake County (CLC), a comprehensive community college located north of Chicago, has been commended for its participative planning process that has permitted its Board, faculty, staff, students, and community to identify future challenges and prepare to meet them. The planning process provides information and insights into the college's past and present conditions that guide decisions on future courses of action. It leads the institution to establish priorities and provides a broad perspective on the college's future direction.

The impending end of the 20th century, new administrative leadership, and certain shifts caused by retirements, technological advancements, curricular innovations, and workplace modifications caused the college to reexamine its planning process and develop ways to revitalize it. Specifically, the college was searching for methods to enhance participation in the process by strengthening the connections across the college and with the community.

The planning process at CLC has been in place for several years. While the methodology remained sound, the time had come to expand and enhance the process, especially in the area of community involvement. Current research on planning cites the benefits of bringing together representatives of the college's stakeholder groups, namely faculty, staff, students, the Board, and community members, in an event that facilitates interaction, reflection, discussion, and action (Brigham 1996). With these thoughts in mind, the college searched for a means to expand involvement in the planning process. It was determined the method had to include the following activities:

- bring together both internal and external college constituents in a shared event
- capture the participative culture of the college
- combine introspection and choice-making
- build new understandings of the college and the environment in which it operates
- lead to the formulation of a strategic direction for the future

After a careful review of several processes, a representative group of college employees and students recommended the future search conference model as the most appropriate (Weisbord and Janoff 1995). The future search conference brings together stakeholders of the college to create a shared future vision for the college.

The College of Lake County's future search conference, titled Preferred Futures @ CLC, was held September 18-20, 1997. It was attended by 103 stakeholders, that is, representatives of the CLC faculty, administration, staff, and students; members of the CLC Board of Trustees; and individuals from the community representing government, education, business, and social services. During the conference, participants met at times in their stakeholder groups, e.g., faculty with faculty, students with students, and at times in their mixed groups. Each mixed group consisted of one or more representatives from each stakeholder group.

The conference began with an exploration of the past, where participants discussed significant personal, global, and college events from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. This discussion focused on the sources of change in everyone's lives. The events listed under all three areas reflected the importance of education to the conference participants. This helped establish a common purpose among the various stakeholders.

Conference participants moved from the past to the present through a brainstorming process that resulted in a group mind map of major trends affecting the College of Lake County. Each major trend was associated with several other trends. This colorful display served to demonstrate the large number and variety of external influences on the college. It also promoted an understanding of the stakeholders' diverse perspectives of the college's role in the community.

These trends were used as the building blocks for the development of preferred futures for CLC. Stakeholders worked in groups of eight to ten people to develop scenarios that described the "preferred future" for the college with a target year of 2005. Participants were asked to imagine a future they wanted to work toward without considering cost or difficulty. The year 2005 was chosen because it was far enough in the future that stakeholders would feel free to dream without being constrained by present circumstances.

The scenarios were very creative and diverse. One group asked members of the audience to imagine that they were in the rain forests of Costa Rica to illustrate how classes could be offered anywhere in the world using advanced technology. Another group pretended that they were aliens from another planet arriving at the college to take courses. The aliens found a warm welcome, faculty who spoke their language, and classes at their convenience either on campus or beamed to their ship. Other groups acted out graduation ceremonies where a very diverse group of graduates thanked the college for its supportive faculty, interdisciplinary courses, and solid career preparation.

After the scenarios were presented, conference participants were asked to identify common themes that were evident in all the skits. The process of creating a future for the college continued. The stakeholders now knew what they wanted in the future, and they worked in groups to determine how to get there by formulating goals and strategies around the themes.

After the Preferred Futures @ CLC Conference concluded, the outcomes of the conference were integrated into the college's planning process. Conference activities were shared with the college community in a special issue of the college's environmental scan newsletter, *The Scanner, 2005*. This edition of the newsletter asked the reader to take a look back at a great moment in the college's past, the Preferred Futures @ CLC Conference, from the perspective of the year 2005.

The themes, goals, and strategies were used to formulate the college's strategic goals and objectives for fiscal years 1999 to 2001. In November 1997, as part of the college's established planning process, a series of workshops was held with the conference participants and other members of the college's community to review the conference outcomes and assess the proposed strategic goals and objectives for the next three-year planning cycle. The strategic goals and objectives were then revised based on comments and suggestions from workshop participants and presented to the Board of Trustees for approval.

The Preferred Futures @ CLC Conference provided a setting in which the participants simultaneously learned, analyzed, created, and planned together. It put the college's stakeholders in a position to see the larger system more completely. It provided an opportunity for them to become more connected to the college and more invested in its future. Conference evaluation forms demonstrated the success of the conference. A participant commented, "There were wonderful opportunities for exchange and learning by having activities that mix a variety of constituents." An external stakeholder wrote that the conference provided an "opportunity to have input into the direction of a very important community institution. The continued viability of CLC depends on being able to respond to existing and emerging needs and on continuing to invite the input of a broad cross section of the community." This comment was echoed by another community member, "The opportunity to meet with the other participants was stimulating, and the college's responsiveness to meeting and adapting to the changing needs of our community is something I value."

The Preferred Futures @ CLC Conference was not intended to replace the college's planning process. Indeed, it depended on it. The college's planning process offered a structure already in place to take advantage of the conference outcomes. As the college faces the challenges and opportunities of the next century, the Preferred Futures @ CLC Conference offered the college the opportunity to enhance its connections with the community, and to build consensus on the future of the college and commitment to that future.

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Integrating a Scenario-Based Methodology into the Strategic Planning Process

Steven R. Hoffman
Hugh L. McHenry

A key challenge faced by Crowley's Ridge College when adopting a new strategic planning process was one faced by most higher education institutions in the 90's: How do we plan for the future in a critically uncertain environment? Possible uncertainties include increasing local competition in the educational marketplace by a lower cost provider, decreasing interest in institutional core values by the traditional target market, more competition in fundraising, and increasingly poorer secondary preparation on the part of incoming students.

In order to address these and other issues more effectively, the College is beginning to utilize scenario-based strategic planning as a way to decrease reliance upon traditional forecast-based (and seat-of-the-pants) planning. It is providing a provocative base for strategic conversation among constituents involved in the planning process.

Scenario-Based Strategic Planning

Scenario-based strategic planning has, in a *de facto* sense, been utilized throughout much of military history. The concept began to be formalized in the 50s and 60s as "threat-based" planning, and industry adopted it in the 70s as an extension of "what if?" This approach to planning has traditionally had a direct connection with major strategic decision-making involving considerable risk—perhaps either in a military or "you bet your company" sense—that is, in posing and answering big questions with big ramifications that may involve considerable risk in the face of an uncertain economic (or other) climate.

Much of the rationale for scenario-based planning stems from inadequacies in forecast-based planning. Although forecasts may serve as a reasonable base for near-term planning, the inaccuracies in basing strategic or long-range planning on forecasts is causing business institutions to move away from dependence upon forecasts toward scenario-based strategic planning.

The overall concept of scenario-based decision-making is focused toward considering alternate possible futures that make sense in the context of (and outside of the influence of) the institution, and with little or no consideration of the relative probabilities of the scenarios occurring. Two to four such futures are typically considered, with three being the most common number and more than three or four leading to considerable complexity with little additional value. The generated scenarios are not necessarily unique. It is, in fact, unlikely that any one of the selected scenarios will occur in its entirety, but highly likely that components of more than one scenario will occur. The planning and decision-making process is then designed to address as many of the scenarios as possible, allowing resulting strategic decisions to become more "robust" relative to the different possible futures. The major impact that scenario development brings upon planning is a greater understanding of *provoking influences* environmental to the institution via "strategic conversation" within the planning team and institution. Scenario-based planning is, by nature, a long-term process of initiating and maintaining such a conversation that, in turn, affords better decisions and better overall planning.

Planning at Crowley's Ridge College

Crowley's Ridge College has adopted a scenario-based methodology on a modest scale by using scenarios to prioritize planning topic components rather than for guidance in making one or a few major strategic decisions. Although no major strategic decisions were envisioned in this planning cycle, many lesser ones were.

In order to address the complex set of issues facing the institution, a process was established through which a set of scenarios (developed by the planning team) was considered in light of the mission, planning goals, and institutional inputs (including assessment results) over a five-year planning horizon to create a target set of *institutional goals.* These goals, along with the other institutional inputs, were used to inform individual *candidate plan topics* that ultimately (after institutional approval) comprised a series of *strategic component plans.* This component of the annual planning cycle is illustrated in Figure 1.

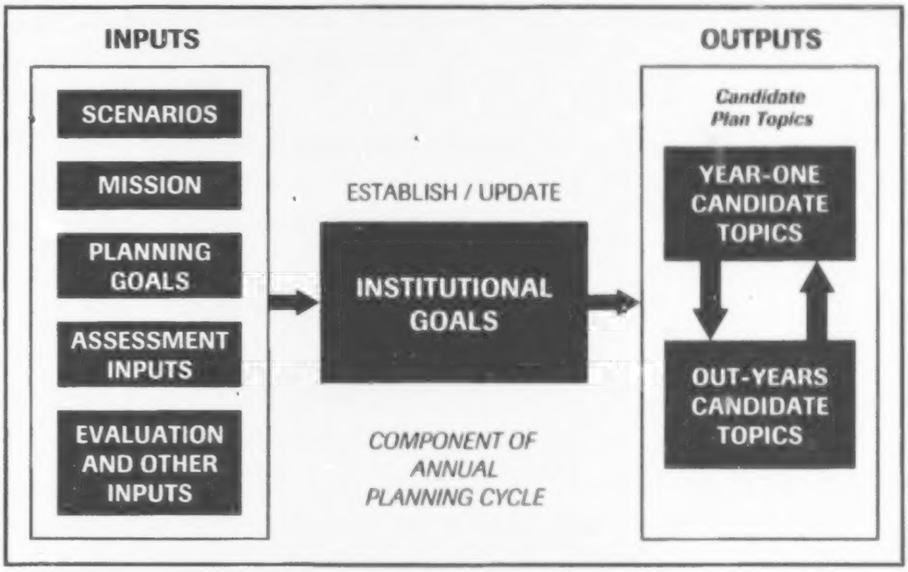

Figure 1. Creating the Candidate Plan Topics

Provoking Influences

The institutional environment comprises a large set of *provoking influences* or forces, of which a relatively small number may be key or critical. An example is the continuing availability of Federal Student Financial Aid. Such critical influences have two major properties:

1. They exist from (or through) the present until (or beyond) some future time.
2. They are outside of the reasonable control of the organization (i.e., college or university). In general, they are external to the institution, but internal cases (such as a deeply imbedded culture) do exist.

Identifying Predetermined Elements and Critical Uncertainties

Once the provoking influences were established, they were distributed into two categories: *predetermined elements* and *critical uncertainties. Predetermined elements* do not depend upon any particular future chain of events. If something seems certain to occur, it is considered a *predetermined element.* It is the inevitable, or the "chickens coming home to roost." The size of the college age population in a college's recruiting area is an example of a predetermined force. On the other hand, uncertainties are (in general) the set of provoking influences that remain after predetermined elements have been removed. An example is federal legislation assisting families in affording college costs. In particular, a *critical uncertainty* is an uncertainty that is key to the focal issue *and* allows a better understanding of the key uncertain provocations or forces and their relationships with each other. At Crowley's Ridge

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College the critical uncertainty list was simplified to those few that the planning team believed were most important to the focal issue *and* the most difficult to predict.

The planning team established forty-six provoking influences in six categories (social, economic, market, competition, technology, and political). As a guide to categorizing those influences, an extensive institutional data summary took place that occupied several of the early planning meetings. The planning process input set used to develop the candidate topics ultimately included:

- a review of (that could have initiated a change in) the institutional mission statement
- a set of planning goals established by the planning team connecting the mission statement to the intended future of the College
- assessment planning and a summary of assessment results
- institutional performance and prioritization evaluation from constituency (survey) inputs
- a state-of-the-college summary including financial/budgetary information
- special inputs submitted by constituents (such as program proposals or concerns)
- scenario-based information developed by the planning team (after the other inputs were reviewed)

The planning team reviewed the respective sets of data. Each member then was asked to indicate on a worksheet two aspects of each of the listed provoking influences:

1. Is the item a *predetermined element* or a *critical uncertainty?*
2. Is the probable *significance* of the topic to the institution High, Medium, or Low?

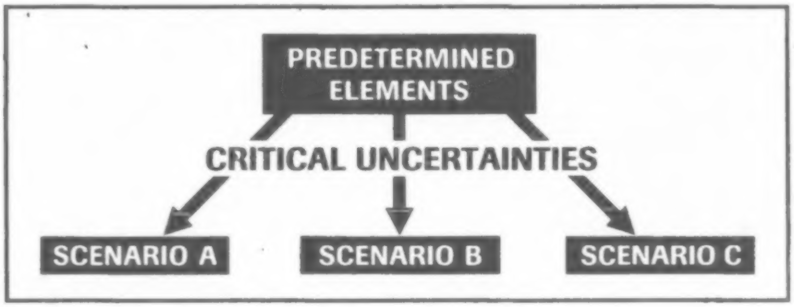

Figure 2. Scenario Plot Construction

The worksheet was used as a tool for breakout sessions of planning team groups. On the basis of strategic conversations within these groups and in main planning sessions, the provoking influences were separated into *predetermined elements* and *critical uncertainties*, each set ranked in order of significance. Both groups turned out to be equally numbered (twenty-three each). The *predetermined elements* became one of the major institutional inputs along with the assessment results, institutional survey inputs, and other key pieces of data. They also served as a basis for grouping the *critical uncertainties* in order to detect and develop overall "plots" as depicted in Figure 2.

Scenario Plot Development

As the critical uncertainties were reviewed, three central factors, variables, or "axes" of uncertainty became apparent within the first ten (of twenty-three) items. The key categories identified by the team were:

- future prime constituency (church-affiliated) student prospects
- future prime constituency (church-affiliated) donor activity
- other future financial aid and support availability (including government and other sources)

Only one critical uncertainty from the list prioritized by the planning team did *not* fall into one of the three categories. Because of this, these three categories were adopted as "principal axes" for developing the scenario plots, which naturally formed eight different combinations (Figure 3). These combinations allowed the planning team to group uncertainties in order to ultimately identify and choose three alternative scenarios. A fourth *(Close the Doors)* scenario was also identified, but the team did not consider it productive to include it.

PRIME CONSTITUENCY STUDENTS	PRIME CONSTITUENCY DONORS	OTHER FINANCIAL AID	SCENARIOS
HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	***What a Wonderful World*** Excellent student and donor support
HIGH	HIGH	LOW	
HIGH	LOW	HIGH	***The Next Generation*** Traditional student base available, but declining donor support
HIGH	LOW	LOW	
LOW	HIGH	HIGH	***The Twilight Zone*** Declining traditional student base, but paradigm shift required
LOW	HIGH	LOW	
LOW	LOW	HIGH	
LOW	LOW	LOW	***Close The Doors*** Not productive.

Figure 3. Three-Axis Model Scenario Breakout

The boxed combinations in the axis columns summarize the scenario groupings considered appropriate to the institution by the planning team. Plot uncertainties included future financial aid availability (in all three major scenario plots) as well as prime constituency (church-affiliated) donor support in the Twilight Zone scenario.

Scenario Options

Brief plot descriptions were then developed for the three potentially useful scenarios based on the groupings:

- **What a Wonderful World.** The future of the affiliated church in Northeast Arkansas and its relationship to Crowley's Ridge College will continue to improve through the plan/scenario period with respect to both students and financial support. Aggressive recruiting and fundraising will be required because the College will have to compete more intensively with other Christian colleges. The institution will remain resilient enough to withstand evolutionary decreases in financial aid or other financial resources.

- **The Next Generation.** Although the available target student base will be good to excellent over the scenario period, affiliated church-based financial support will deteriorate even though fundraising efforts are intensified. Other sources of income will be obtained and the College will aggressively seek productive and creative collaborations and articulations.

- **The Twilight Zone.** Although some manner of financial support will continue, the traditional church-affiliated student base will deteriorate. Other student populations will be actively recruited in order to maintain the institution for remaining and future prime constituency students. One component of this will include an increasing emphasis (and expertise development) on serving at-risk students that, in many cases, will also have a low motivation to learn. The College will also be required to move more toward a missionary model (reaching out beyond the traditional constituency to non-affiliated persons and groups).

By considering these scenarios in planning, it is possible to improve the robustness of the plans as well as the planning process. Future planning will include testing the extent to which the institution is moving toward any of the scenarios, and potentially altering or changing the scenario base. The scenarios will be revisited (and perhaps revised) annually by the planning team.

Institutional Goals Selection

Once the planning inputs were established, the next component of the process was to use the inputs to develop *institutional goals*. By establishing and using such goals, users of the institutional plan are assured that all institutional inputs are goal-filtered and that the institutional goals drive or inform all resulting plan topics. The planning team developed thirty-one institutional goals. This list is not necessarily comprehensive, but an effort was made to ensure that each proposed plan topic had at least one related goal. Each institutional goal was also referenced to the scenarios (in order of significance) as well as to the planning goals.

Planning Topics Development

The final step of this phase of the process was to identify *candidate plan topics*. This was performed utilizing the institutional goals as well as each of the inputs. In order to accomplish this, each of the institutional inputs that was in any way planning-related was condensed into a planning topic worksheet booklet, in which institutional evaluation summaries were indicated on the left side of each page, and possible or tentative proposed planning action on the right side. During an all-day marathon planning retreat, planning team members, after developing the scenarios, analyzed this booklet. Following the marathon planning retreat, the resulting topics were correlated to the institutional goals and divided into appropriate plan topic groups. The overall process was evaluated by planning team members as valuable and afforded the production of a viable strategic plan along with an extensible base for future (following year) planning.

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Self-Studies, Quality, and Strategic Planning: Key Ingredients for Maintaining the Momentum

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Edward P. Hall

With competitive pressures growing, performance budgets increasingly a reality, enrollments under pressure, technology changing at an accelerating pace, and legislative support waning, the demand to demonstrate improved institutional effectiveness grows ever more significant. If institutional assessment is driven by each special event, such as an accreditation visit or governmental mandates, it becomes an expensive process that yields only short-run gains. Continuous institutional assessment efforts are preferable to event- driven efforts because they have greater potential impact on institutional effectiveness. More than ever, effective strategic planning processes are the key to the continuous institutional assessment so essential for effective day-to-day decision making.

Institutional assessment is more than measuring what "is" or collecting useful indicators. Rather, it is a continuous cycle of determining where the institution wants to be at some time in the future, defining where it is now, and developing strategies to take the institution from where it is now to where it wants to be.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning provides an internally generated guidance document with a medium to long term outlook, facilitates budget decisions, influences university priorities, and defines the role and scope of the institution. Strategic plans should include strategies that respond to previous NCA and other accreditation team reports or other external feedback such as quality award applications. Annual, in-depth sessions are essential to refine and operationalize goals and provide strategic direction.

Strategic planning tends to be viewed as having an end product that can be put on the shelf to gather dust, rather than as a living process that continuously provides input into future decisions. What is equally problematic is that some strategic plans incorporate impractical "pie-in-the-sky" goals or include more goals and objectives than can possibly be addressed.

WNMU minimized these inhibiting factors by using the annual quality award applications and self-study processes as feedback channels to the strategic planning processes. Further solidification of the process occurs through operational plans developed at the vice presidential level that translate the macro level strategies found in the strategic plan into micro level actions.

At Western New Mexico University, the NCA reaccreditation visit scheduled for the spring of 1997 was regarded as an integral input to the strategic planning process that began in 1994 under the leadership of a new president. Strategic planning was further complemented by an annual state quality award assessment process based on the Malcolm Baldrige Award criteria in which WNMU has participated since 1994. From the outset, both the self-study and the quality award applications were viewed as inextricably linked with ongoing institutional assessment efforts.

Strategic planning at WNMU takes place during two multi-day sessions held in late May and early August where input from key administrative, faculty, staff, and student leaders is sought. Often stimulus may come from discussions based on short presentations; other ideas are generated by individuals as they review previous planning efforts in small groups.

The president made it clear from the start that a strategic plan was a "living" document. The loose-leaf format of the plan reinforces its dynamic nature. The document serves as an implicit and explicit reference for direction and decision making. Refinements to the document are made as needed to reinforce the building of a quality educational institution. Without this dynamic strategic planning focus, identification of critical change priorities would be difficult.

Continuous Quality Improvement

An emphasis on total quality management provides an opportunity to address areas identified as concerns (e.g., technology planning, financial aid, distance learning, registration, year-end closing, advising) through the use of process management teams (PMTs). The need for such teams is regularly reviewed, as are processes in need of improvement. Each PMT receives general training that involves a broad campus constituency and assists the PMT members in monitoring the institutionalization of team recommendations. The drive for continuous quality improvement mandates measurements and benchmarks (national, regional, and state) to make assessment efforts more precise. This, in turn, supports a more realistic strategic planning process by enhancing accountability and supporting factually based decision making. At Western, a quality consultant provided by Sandia National Laboratories provides ongoing expertise to assist in building assessment process linkages.

Feedback from quality award reviewers clarifies the impact the university's planning activities are having and whether the strategic planning process is sufficiently institutionalized to provide appropriate guidance for decision making. Initially, limited data were available to support institutional assessment efforts—a fact noted by the quality reviewers.

Self-Study

Self-study processes, the most notable being those for generalized institution-wide accreditation, focus on the university's mission, the adequacy of resources to support operations now and in the future, assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness, planning, and integrity. Self-study concerns from previous Team Reports should be placed into the context of the strategic and operating plans.

During 1995, preparation for Western's NCA evaluation for continued accreditation began in earnest with the appointment of a Self-Study Coordinator. The Self-Study Coordinator's review of the quality award material deemed it to be too superficial and anecdotal to be of much use. This situation changed considerably over time, as WNMU better aligned its activities with its mission, as quality award criteria specifically related to education were made available, and as longitudinal data linked to strategic planning strategies began to be developed. The Self-Study Coordinator insisted on linking existing strategic planning efforts with the self-study process.

The Self-Study Coordinator was willing to take on the self-study responsibilities only with assurance that the effort would not end up on a shelf in the president's or vice presidents' offices. This point of view, coupled with the president's belief in a dynamic planning process based on the total quality premise of continuous improvement, helped build the momentum for current institutional assessment efforts.

Historically, WNMU has had frequent accreditation visits that resulted in critical reports; efforts to remediate this began when the president institutionalized strategic planning and committed the institution to Quality New Mexico assessment. Self-study processes strengthened institutional assessment by essentially forcing the entire campus to get involved and take a hard look at where each unit was, what problems it faced, and what it and what other units could do to improve the situation (other than throwing money at it that WNMU did not have). It would have been difficult to develop the campus momentum to assume these responsibilities without the self-study process. Faculty and staff were disillusioned with strategic planning, which in the past had been a time consuming process with little follow through. The quality efforts were received with mixed, if not hostile, feelings. The perceived "legitimacy" of NCA and other accreditation standards within the university community convinced faculty and staff that their participation was crucial despite skepticism about previous strategic planning.

Today, Western New Mexico University integrates its many planning processes–strategic, technology, operational, facilities, ADA, and other internal planning efforts (including institutional and discipline-specific self-studies) and applications for a statewide quality award–to generate the synergy that improves its educational efforts. Although this was initially a somewhat tortured process, with practice it is becoming a seamless one.

It is not possible to determine whether dynamic strategic planning propelled successful self-study efforts, whether self-study efforts encouraged a meaningful quality emphasis, whether the quest for quality fueled a dynamic strategic planning process, or whether having a strong leader-president drove the undertaking. The consistent focus on the mission of WNMU, which all the processes mandate, together with leadership focused on the long-run, most likely resulted in WNMU's recent successes.

Positive Aspects of Multiple Ongoing Assessment

Positive effects from ongoing institutional assessment are many. Most notable is the vitality that characterizes the campus climate as it commits to continuous efforts to measure effectiveness and to assess progress. Continuous, multiple perspective monitoring creates an incentive to document efforts and allows the institution to identify and address more problem areas. Accountability increases, and awareness of the need to "think ahead," to document, and to measure activities expands. Continuity makes measurement easier, because with each cycle of review, priorities are framed in a longer-term context. That context supports the NCA criteria, accountability, quality, and institutional needs. New ways to measure and new areas to measure naturally result from such continuity.

Concerns are addressed in a systematic and orderly fashion as the institution moves away from crisis to coordinated management. Change, as an increasingly accepted part of the institutional culture, allows the university to respond more effectively to customers and suppliers and to support improved management, leadership, and vision. Specialized accreditation efforts also benefit because the institution is better able to identify and address potential concerns. Budget and program reviews more routinely reflect appropriate institutional priorities.

The slightly different outlooks and purposes of different assessment processes also broaden the information base. More people have a stake in the outcome, so their participation grows. This helps to transform the basic fabric of the organization by opening up additional lines of communication for decision making.

Finally, the more continuous the process, the greater the likelihood that changes will result in lasting improvements and will become a basic part of the fabric of the organization. Knowledge about the institution helps to inform budget decisions, to determine the impact of decisions on mission, and to answer questions from constituents and legislators regarding use of tax dollars or tuition and fee revenues. The University's governing board can better define what the institution does and why because board members are participants in the various processes. A foundation is built that reinforces success without the need to constantly return to the drawing board.

Downside to Multiple Approaches to Assessment

Continuous introspective processes have their downside. The university seldom can shift into neutral and just enjoy its successes. Sustained energy and effort are essential since change is a slow and easily stalled process. Also, the temptation exists to focus only on what is easily managed or easily measured.

Major Similarities of the Processes

At the heart of institutional effectiveness is the need for measurable assessments that guide actions. The emphasis is on results and on concrete facts, measures, or indicators that provide evidence that the institution can sustain the improvements. A second similarity stresses the defining role of the institution's mission as a critical beacon guiding the institution's actions.

Integrity is also an explicit component of each, as are efforts to enhance institutional effectiveness and stress on accountability. Because performance results are what matter, all three are non-prescriptive in intent–wide latitude is provided in how criteria, goals, strategies, etc., are actually met. Finally, the criteria used to define each process are comprehensive, include dynamic linkages, are directed toward improved overall performance, emphasize balance and reinforcement, and incorporate self-examination into the process.

Major Differences among Assessment Processes

Time frames differ among assessment processes. For example, at Western strategic planning is ongoing, Quality New Mexico applications are annual, general institutional reaccreditation self-studies ideally come no more often than every ten years, and specialized accreditation reports are also at specific intervals. Self-studies and quality applications are basically snapshots in time, whereas strategic planning is a regularly edited video. All assessments involve internal reviews; but some, such as accreditation self-study processes and quality award applications, include significant external reviews.

Quality-based assessments demand more quantitative data, whereas the self-study primarily looks at patterns of evidence that are qualitative in nature. Strategic planning uses, and to some extent defines, what kind of information an institution should maintain.

The language used to define the processes differs considerably–quality based assessments are written in a language most likely found in the corporate boardroom; self-studies are written in a language familiar to the academic community; strategic planning blends the two. If one looks in the index of the *Handbook of Accreditation* there are no references to TQM or quality management teams. Perusal of the *Education Pilot Criteria* will find no references to accreditation self-studies or accrediting bodies.

Conclusion

WNMU's strategic planning processes incorporate multiple assessment mechanisms that reflect the institution's commitment to the pursuit of quality in higher education. These efforts are guided by TQM principles and the Baldrige Award, the North Central Criteria for Accreditation and General Institutional Requirements, and specialized accreditation criteria. They are supported and reinforced through strategic planning processes. Planning efforts that support institutional assessment after the completion of the self-study provide an historical context, report on strengths and weaknesses, build on identified strengths, and confront identified weaknesses. Institutional assessment becomes part of the everyday working environment and structure of the institution.

The synergy generated from these complementary processes is positive from an accreditation standpoint because they more effectively articulate the institution's commitment to use the self-study process primarily for institutional improvement rather than just to get by or to have credibility with one's peers.

Notes

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria are managed by the United States Department of Commerce, Technology Administration, National Institute of Standards and Technology in Gaithersburg, MD. The award criteria are administered by the ASQC located in Milwaukee, WI. The New Mexico Quality Awards are administered by Quality New Mexico, an organization located in Albuquerque, and designed to promote and develop a statewide focus on quality practices within New Mexico.

While most readers are somewhat familiar with NCA language, consider this from the Malcolm Baldrige education pilot criteria.

> Central and crucial to the success of the excellence concept in the Education Pilot Criteria is a well-conceived and well-executed assessment strategy. The characteristics of such a strategy should include the following:
>
> - clear ties between what is assessed and the school's mission objectives. This means not only what students know, but also what they are able to do.
> - a main focus on improvement–of student performance, faculty capabilities, and school program performance;
> - assessment as embedded and ongoing. This means that assessment needs to be curriculum-based, and criterion-referenced, aimed at fostering improved understanding of learning goals and overall performance requirements;
> - clear guidelines regarding how assessment results will be used and how they will not be used; and
> - an ongoing approach of reevaluating the assessment system to improve the connection between assessment and student success. Success factors should be developed based on external requirements derived from the marketplace, other schools, etc. (p.7)

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GRASP: Growing Through Reaccreditation with Strategic Planning

Kay Kunst Clawson

The presentation that correlates with this paper focuses upon how a small college involved the entire campus in an institutional collaboration to begin a proactive process of change. Reaccreditation was fast approaching as the long time college president announced his retirement, an interim president was in control for a year, and a new president was hired.

Higher education reform was mandated by the West Virginia State Legislature in 1995, and the arrival of the North Central Association Commission's two-year reminder notice found West Liberty State College in the midst of a presidential search and many legislative mandates to create change. These circumstances required the self-study committee to work as a collaborative team in order to conduct its North Central Association self-study as well as move forward with the institutional changes. This collaboration encouraged faculty, staff, and students to embark on the mission of envisioning shared governance where successful and optimistic interactions occurred. The visions created during the NCA self-study emerged as positive forces in the college's strategic planning process that began in 1996.

Collaboration Process

Institutional collaboration began with the appointment of a self-study steering committee composed of faculty, students, staff, and administrative representatives who were charged with the responsibility to organize and direct the self-study effort. This collaboration continued when the Committees began to develop the procedures and organization of the self-study; to conduct surveys of faculty, staff, and students; to review criterion reports by the subcommittees; to develop and to approve the institutional self-study document; and to prepare for the visit of the Evaluation Team.

Through the organization of the self-study, a "Five-Step Plan" was designed by the Steering Committee in order to ensure a collaborative effort of encouraging continued change after the accreditation process had been completed.

- ◇ The **Preparation** phase included the organizing and planning for the 1998 North Central Association visit. Five criterion committees and twenty subcommittees were appointed, and each committee was charged with gathering and analyzing information central to one of the NCA criteria. Since committees were composed of faculty, staff, and student members, a cross-section of the college community was involved in the collaborative process.

- ◇ During the **Reflection** phase committees gathered existing data from administrative offices and colleagues. The committees also created, disseminated, and collected questionnaires designed to provide additional specific student and academic services information. The members of the committees then analyzed the information and wrote conclusions based upon the information that had been assembled.

- ◇ During the **Inventory** phase the subcommittees synthesized information collected in the reflection phase in order to discover institutional strengths, challenges, and opportunities. This information was then forwarded to the various Criterion committee chairs to continue the inventory phase. Also, during this phase, the Steering Committee designed and distributed a questionnaire to all faculty, staff, and administrative personnel, along with a random sampling of students. The questions were based on the collected data from the committees and were used to supplement the initial impressions of institutional quality and satisfaction along with substantial concerns of the college campus.

◇ The **Integration** phase and the **Facilitation** phase operated simultaneously. During the fall semester following the initial phases of the "Five-Step Plan," a new college president convened a group of representatives of alumni, faculty, staff, administration, students, and business leaders from across the community to conduct an Institutional Strategic Planning Retreat. The self-study process had already analyzed various aspects of the campus community, and this information was then used by the various constituents during the 1996 Strategic Planning Retreat. The result of this planning retreat was "Vision to the Year 2000: A Strategic Plan for West Liberty State College." This has been followed with a revised version document, "West Liberty State College Strategic Plan for the Year 2000 and Annual Operational Plan for 1997-98," that not only assigned ownership, but provided a summary of action steps, resources, and costs necessary to fulfill the directives.

This "Five-Step Plan" developed during the self-study process was the catalyst that led to a modification of the vision of the college. The NCA self-study process identified many challenges and concerns as well as an equal number of strengths and resources. With a subsequent aggressive and thorough Strategic Planning, a positive documented change occurred for the campus community and region.

This plan has been developed to parallel essential core activities that must be accomplished for an organization to be effective. According to Owens (302-304), indicators of effective organizations include:

1. **Goal focus:** Employees in the organization "understand and accept the achievable and appropriate goals of the organization."
2. **Communication adequacy:** Employees engage with ease in "vertical and horizontal internal communication."
3. **Optimal power equalization:** This dimension emphasizes the issue of collaboration versus coercion.
4. **Human resources utilization:** Personnel feel they are allowed to grow and develop in their jobs.
5. **Cohesiveness:** Participants want to remain with the organization to influence the collaborative style.
6. **Morale:** Personnel have "feelings of well-being and satisfaction."
7. **Innovativeness:** Employees tend to devise new procedures and goals over a period of time.
8. **Autonomy:** Organization "tends to determine its own behavior in harmony."
9. **Adaptation:** Organization begins to change and adapt faster than environment.
10. **Problem solving adequacy:** "Mechanisms for sensing and perceiving problems."

Organizations may atrophy over time. The process of organizational self-renewal capability is called Organizational Development. Organizational Development is a coherent systematically planned self-study (Owen 1998).

Strategic Plan as a Catalyst for Improvement

The 1996 Strategic Planning Retreat established a new direction for the college. It represented the beginning of a new process for assessing, planning, and decision making. The Strategic Plan document started the campus linkages of communication, easing the threat of change, articulating the College's vision, and developing trust among faculty, staff, and students. This stage began to clarify the nature of shared governance and to reduce ambiguities in the planning and decision making process. During the retreat, development of a new mission statement, identification of core values, and a creation of "A Vision to the Year 2000" took place. Also, the twelve strategic goals, with discussion of how to achieve each one, were developed.

The first planning retreat created a document that was distributed throughout the campus community. This document shared the planning format, identified the twelve strategic goals, and shared the new vision with all interested constituent groups. Feedback was requested, and the campus community was willing to support all the new initiatives. The president appointed twelve planning teams composed of faculty, staff, students, and administrative representatives to transform the strategic goal into specific objectives with attainable benchmarks.

The following year another Strategic Planning Retreat included an in-depth analysis of the previous year's goals and objectives. The group looked at what had been accomplished, what may have been missing from the original plan, and what had not been accomplished. The group identified 196 specific accomplishments that directly supported the strategic plan. Areas of significant improvement included administrative structure, private funding, technology, campus safety, assessment, student services, and community partnerships.

The updated strategic plan is a document that will foster growth and maximum effectiveness for the future of the college. A solid commitment to the strategic planning process has encouraged the campus community to make tremendous strides toward a sound future. As a result, the institution has reviewed its purposes to be sure they are consistent with its mission and analyzed the planning process to see that it integrated the process of improving. Strategic planning is a catalyst for improvement or positive change.

Conclusion

The creation of a different organizational culture requires employees to act differently than they have acted in the past. Change is more likely to be stabilized over time. The intention of collaboration with others and increased participation in decision making is insufficient to assure success. Efforts must be accompanied by the development of concrete change processes. The timing of the NCA self-study coincided exactly with state mandates for change and with a strategic planning initiative of a new chief executive. Not only has the NCA self-study process set the stage for these major institutional changes, but it has also provided categories for change that may be initiated immediately as a result of this syzygy.

During the twentieth century, the emergence of change concepts has created societies that believe change is a reaction to values and events. The time has arrived for organizations to plan and manage change by becoming proactive instead of reactive. Strategic Planning is a way of restructuring school systems through self-renewal by changing the behavior of employees. Educational change is a slow process, but with Strategic Planning it signals to the employees that new ideas and new ways of doing business are becoming possible as the culture changes. The NCA self-study process is a natural and effective means to initiate such change.

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Using the Self-Study to Improve Institutional Planning and Build Commitment to Change

Fredrick J. Dobney
Deborah L. Lassila

In 1996, the administration at Michigan Tech was faced with determining how to proceed in the pursuit of continued accreditation by the North Central Association. The path of least resistance would have been to answer specifically the questions raised by the Criteria and General Institutional Requirements. Even such a response, however, would have required marshalling significant university resources to achieve that end. It was our judgment that more could be accomplished than simply getting a "check in the box." Therefore, we determined that we would structure the accreditation process in such a way as to provide an assessment of our strategic planning process and the university's achievements relative to its eight goals. We engaged a large number of faculty, staff, administrators, and students in this endeavor. The result has been a positive one: we believe that we have arrived at a comprehensive assessment of the university's progress as well as a prescription for needed improvements.

The University

Michigan Tech is a public doctoral-granting university located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. MTU currently enrolls approximately 6,200 students, including 650 graduate students. Michigan Tech is currently classified Doctoral II, although we have achieved the threshold for Doctoral I status according to the Carnegie Classification of Higher Education. Our mission is to benefit the State and society through education, research, and public service in science, engineering, and related disciplines.

The Strategic Planning Process

In his State of the University Address in 1993, President Curtis J. Tompkins stated that our "planning process should foster educational purposefulness." Accomplishing our vision requires the articulation of a strategic plan to guide decision making and against which to measure our progress. Thus, in 1994, the university articulated a strategic plan that had eight strategic goals (see figure 1). These eight goals create a framework for planning in all segments of the university. The annual strategic planning process, and the budget that results from it, are aimed toward the realization of the mission and vision of the university. By pushing the strategic planning process down to the departmental level, the plan provides a process and context for prioritizing budget initiatives, a mechanism for evaluating progress, and a vehicle for enhancing communication within the university community. The annual budget process requires units to justify requests for new resources based on their initiatives to move the university toward the achievement of its eight goals.

☐ **Goal 1:** Sustain and Enhance the Quality of Undergraduate Programs

☐ **Goal 2:** Attract and Retain, Support and Develop Excellent Faculty

☐ **Goal 3:** Strengthen and Develop Graduate Program

☐ **Goal 4:** Enhance and Expand Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity within the University

☐ **Goal 5:** Provide a Rewarding and Challenging Work Environment in which Staff Meet or Exceed Expectations

☐ **Goal 6:** Provide Comprehensive Information Technology Services

☐ **Goal 7:** Develop the MTU Campus and Continuously Maintain the Physical Plant

☐ **Goal 8:** Provide a Stable Financial Environment and Enhance Resource Acquisition

Figure 1. Strategic Goals

The Self-Study Process

In 1996-97, the self-study process was initiated with the appointment of a Self-Study Coordinator and the establishment of a Steering Committee that included the Executive Vice President and Provost, the Director of Budget, Planning, and Faculty Personnel, and chairs of ten "Goal Committees" convened to evaluate the University's progress toward achieving its eight strategic goals (three committees were convened for Goal 1 because of its breadth of scope). During the summer of 1996, the Steering Committee selected a broad and diverse membership of faculty, staff, and students for each Goal Committee and wrote a detailed charge for each to pursue during the 1996-97 academic year. Concurrently, in Fall 1996, the Steering Committee issued guidelines to all academic and administrative departments for preparing departmental self-study reports. Each department created a committee to prepare its report, which included a departmental mission statement, an evaluation of departmental goals, and a recitation of accomplishments since 1988 as they related to the eight University goals. These departmental self-studies became a primary source of information for the Goal Committees.

Each Goal Committee was charged with addressing one of the university's goals, with particular attention paid to the ways in which accomplishing these goals address all five NCA criteria. Accordingly, these Goal Committees organized their reports around the five criteria, abbreviated as follows: Purposes, Resources, Accomplishments, Continuous Improvement, and Integrity. Each committee report concludes with an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to that goal, and an action plan for addressing these issues.

Results of the Self-Study

The value of the accreditation process for Michigan Tech lies in the comprehensive assessment of the university's goals at the local level. Faculty and staff have developed a better understanding of how the change process works because of their participation in the self-study. Change that occurs in the context of a university-wide plan seems less threatening to individual stakeholders than change that is imposed out of context. Faculty and staff seem willing to endorse change as long as they understand its relationship to the overall direction of the university. The self-study process provided a step-by-step blueprint for change at all levels of the university. University goals and objectives have been modified to follow this blueprint, although our level of success is yet to be demonstrated fully. However, the fact that modifications have occurred through this process reinforces the idea of the strategic plan as a living document that responds to changing circumstances. As a result, change is viewed as rational and orderly.

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The Self-Study Process and Strategic Planning: Synthesis in Action

Michael R. Cheney
James M. Reynolds

Introduction

Drake University is a private, independent institution with an enrollment of approximately 5,200 students. The University is comprised of six colleges/schools–the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business and Public Administration, Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and the Schools of Law, Journalism and Mass Communication, and Education.

The University identifies itself as a "New American College" as first defined by Ernest Boyer, which places it in the liberal arts tradition with a focus on teaching, but with an extension of that focus beyond undergraduate liberal arts to professional programs and graduate studies. As stated by Boyer, the defining feature of a New American College is integration: integration of disciplines, of general education and the major, of faculty and students, of classroom and student life, of traditional education and lifelong learning, and of the campus and society. As a New American College, Drake University has adopted and adapted Boyer's broadened definitions of scholarship.

Background

Since 1985, Drake University has been engaged in self-study or strategic planning through several different councils and commissions. In the late 1980s, the University formed a National Commission on the Future of Drake, which involved more than 300 alumni and friends of the University. The purpose of the National Commission was to review the programs and progress of the various academic units and non-academic units on campus. The recommendations of this group laid the foundation for a successful fundraising campaign that addressed a number of campuswide issues.

In the early 1990s, the University called upon more than 400 members of the Drake community for a second National Commission. The charge for this group was to review the past work of the first National Commission and to assess the current and future status of the various units on campus. As a result of this review, more than 300 recommendations for improving the institution were forwarded to campuswide planning and implementation groups. In concert with this overview of Drake by the National Commission, the University began to review a range of issues and concerns under the auspices of a Planning and Priorities Council–a campus-wide group of faculty and staff. This council reviewed all free standing centers of the University for their continued funding based on merit, analyzed a range of student services and made recommendations for their integration, and reviewed issues of administrative efficiency, staff productivity, and technology.

These broad based groups provided one dimension to the culture of strategic planning that has characterized Drake University. There were other ongoing processes that added other dimensions to the culture of strategic planning at Drake. For example, individual units, specifically professional schools/colleges and specialized programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, engaged in regular self-studies for their specific reaccreditations. Also, in 1996 Drake underwent a comprehensive review from the NCAA for recertification of its Division I athletics program.

During the 1995-96 academic year, discussions were held with faculty and staff to explore how best to conduct and compile information for the self-study. The general consensus was that the strategic reviews taking place on campus during that time as well as the other reports of planning and implementation previously submitted to the campus community would provide a solid foundation for the self-study process, scheduled for academic year 1996-97, and that the self-study process should take full advantage of these activities to build a stronger report. There was also strong sentiment that much of the early work necessary for the comprehensive visit's self-study had already been done in preliminary fashion in many areas.

Planning for the Self-Study Process

Taking the comments into account, the designated Self-Study Coordinator conducted an audit of the types and kinds of self-studies and strategic reviews that had been taking place in the past ten years. The result was a fairly extensive list of reviews and reports that addressed in various ways a good portion of the Criteria for Accreditation and provided solid examples for patterns of evidence for those criteria.

With this initial review completed, the Self-Study Coordinator and the Chair of the Self-Study Steering Committee reviewed various NCA Self-Studies from other institutions and began developing an outline for the University's report. The outline developed identified where portions of the Self-Study Report could build on previously conducted studies and where new studies needed to be developed. At this point, the Self-Study Steering Committee was appointed. The committee consisted of individuals who had been involved in either the University-wide self-studies or unit self-studies, as well as representatives from other segments of the University to ensure broad-based representation and involvement. In its meetings during the 1996-97 academic year, the Committee reviewed the Criteria for Accreditation and discussed the initial outline. The Committee also asked Drake University faculty and staff who had served as NCA C-Es to discuss with the Committee the ideal Self-Study Report and to review the outline being developed to ascertain areas needing inclusion, amplification or deletion. Responsibilities for various sections of the report were then assigned and deadlines were established for submitting final drafts. Toward this objective, committee members began reviewing previous studies that pertained to their areas, contacting other individuals who might be able to add additional information to the report of their areas, and writing the relevant sections of the self-study.

The decentralized structure allowed for more broad based participation. In each area, faculty, administration, and staff participated in discussions, read drafts, offered comments, and endorsed the final draft. In several cases, entire units read and approved the final draft.

As drafts were finalized, the Steering Committee Chair began compiling the drafts and organizing the segments into a coherent framework. The Self-Study Coordinator then reviewed and revised the reports to produce a draft, which was circulated to Drake administrators and faculty who had served as C-Es. Comments from this draft were then integrated into a second draft, which was distributed campus wide via hard copy to each of the major units on campus. In addition, the draft was converted into an HTML document and posted on Drake University's Intranet web site.

With the distribution of the draft, faculty, students, and staff were advised via a system wide e-mail message of the report's availability and asked to provide responses back to the Self-Study Steering Committee Chair. Comments were received both electronically and in memo form. These comments, as well as a review by the chief editorial writer/editor for the University's Marketing and Communication division were incorporated into the University's official Self-Study Report. Copies of the Report were sent to the Evaluation Team members, to the various offices around campus, and to the library. A copy of the final Report was also posted on the aforementioned internal web site.

Insights

Many institutions use the self-study process as a way to engage the campus community for further strategic planning and review. Drake University began with the opposite situation—a culture of planning and review that was to be involved in the self-study process. As a result, the NCA self-study process was positively received by all segments of the University.

The experience at Drake shows that by building on existing studies and reviews, the process became more focused on areas where additional information was needed and that by having a strong foundation of planning during the self-study process, a more robust and evaluative analysis was produced.

Evaluation

In reviewing the process, members of the Self-Study Steering Committee offered the following evaluation:

- Utilizing work previously done by other planning and integrative groups across campus allowed faculty and staff on the self-study committee to use their time to build on the earlier activities and to deepen their analysis and evaluation of the University.

- The decentralized process did result in unevenness in describing and reviewing the various schools and colleges. While the Committee did use an outline for the subsections of the report, an earlier sharing of drafts between and among the educational programs would have produced a more even coverage of the various areas for a more concise chapter.

- Finally, members of the Steering Committee who were surveyed suggested that future self-studies would benefit from cross-functional groups working on a specific section. By bringing individuals involved in the specific area under review, as well as those without a deep knowledge or bias of the area, a broader perspective on the concerns and issues being reviewed might be generated.

Overall, the synthesis of the ongoing strategic planning process and the NCA self-study process provided Drake University with a more robust and insightful analysis and review than would have been otherwise expected.

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Chapter 11

NCA

Coordinating the Self-Study Process

THE Collaborative Imperative

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Ten Key Components of a Successful Self-Study

John T. Farr

This paper is directed toward recently appointed Self-Study Coordinators and others with leadership roles in planning and implementing a self-study in preparation for an institutional continued accreditation review by the North Central Association. The paper is based on the writer's experience as Self-Study Coordinator and chairperson of the Steering Committee charged with preparing for the NCA's decennial review of the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) that culminated in a visit by an Evaluation Team in April 1997. The team recommended continued accreditation at the doctoral degree level, with no stipulations, and the next comprehensive evaluation scheduled in ten years. While the following observations are based on the experience of a single institution, most of them should prove generalizable, at least in part, to other institutions as well.

An institutional self-study, like any major writing project involving a number of contributors, requires planning that is both careful and comprehensive. Time invested in effective planning at the outset will result not only in a more orderly, focused process but also in considerably less frustration, confusion, and duplication of effort along the way. This paper identifies ten key elements in planning, organizing, and implementing a self-study, and attempts to offer some practical suggestions to Self-Study Coordinators in addressing each area.

1. Membership of the Self-Study Steering Committee

Self-study planning begins with the appointment of a strong, effective Steering Committee. The committee should be representative of key campus constituencies: the Self-Study Report is an *institutional* document, and representatives of the primary constituencies of the institution should be involved in preparing it. The nine-person UNO committee included faculty, staff, administrative, and student members representing four colleges and the three main administrative divisions of the university. Beyond representativeness, the committee should include good writers (the more of these the better!) and people who grasp the functioning of the institution, who understand its problems and opportunities, and who know where to locate needed data and how to get things done. If available, a member of the NCA Consultant-Evaluator Corps and a member of the institution's previous self-study Steering Committee also should be considered as potential committee members or as resource persons. Given the current emphasis on assessment, the institution's assessment coordinator or assessment committee chairperson might well be included on the committee. If not, close coordination with that individual or committee will be essential.

2. Role of the Self-Study Coordinator

As the title implies, the function of the Self-Study Coordinator is to *coordinate* the self-study–not to do it all by himself/herself. To be sure, the Coordinator plays a critical role throughout the process, e.g., ensuring that plans are developed and implemented on schedule, overseeing the editing process or perhaps doing the actual editing of the document, arranging for publication and distribution of the Self-Study Report and institutional data forms, etc. The Coordinator must become knowledgeable about NCA accreditation requirements, the five Criteria for Accreditation, patterns of evidence and indicators, etc. But at the end of the day the self- study is the product of numerous colleagues–members of the Steering Committee and perhaps many others across the campus–rather than the work of a single individual. Even so, the Coordinator should plan on a major time commitment, especially toward the end of the process, and adjust other duties accordingly.

3. Resource planning

As with all major projects, the self-study process entails certain costs. To avoid unpleasant surprises later, these should be budgeted early in the process. Costs will include the NCA evaluation fee, printing, hospitality during the team's visit, possible travel to subsequent NCA Annual Meetings, possibly a pre-visit by the Team Chair, and release time for one or more people to work on the self-study (e.g., as editor) if applicable.

4. Preparing the Self-Study Plan

The Self-Study Plan represents the first written product of the self-study process; the quality of the plan likely will prove to be a major determinant of the quality of the Self-Study Report. The key question in developing the plan is how the Self-Study Report will be organized. Essentially, the self-study can be built around the institution's organizational structure, the five Criteria, a key issue the institution wishes to address (e.g. planning), or some combination of the above. There are advantages and disadvantages to each approach, but whatever scheme is adopted the self-study must clearly indicate that the institution fulfills the five Criteria for Accreditation. Since it is likely that members of the Evaluation Team will be given organizational unit assignments during the visit, it will be helpful if each major unit has a section somewhere in the report. UNO devoted at least one chapter to each criterion (two for Criterion Three), but included a section for each unit in the chapters on Criterion Three. In building the case that the institution fulfills the Criteria, special care should be given to the patterns of evidence and indicators as described in Chapter 4 of the *Handbook of Accreditation* and to the assessment of student academic achievement.

A special focus approach may be especially useful in particular situations. But this should be thought out carefully and coordinated with the institution's leadership and governance structure, as well as the institution's NCA staff liaison.

The plan should include a section (or chapter) addressing recommendations made in the last comprehensive visit as well as any focused visits that have occurred since then. The plan also should ensure that all critical issues, concerns, and problems are addressed somewhere in the document. The credibility of the self-study will not be enhanced if the team discovers a significant issue that was not addressed in the report.

In brief, the key to developing the plan is to organize the whole into logical, manageable parts, and then to make data collection and writing assignments for each part. Assignments also should be made to complete the various institutional data forms. Working backward from the date of the visit, a realistic timeline for data collection, drafting, editing, and printing should be developed. It may be helpful to provide extra time at the end of the process in case earlier steps take longer than planned—which was certainly the case in UNO's self-study.

In making writing assignments, consideration should be given to involving people outside the Steering Committee—to share the workload, but even more importantly, to make it a truly institutional self-study. In UNO's case, various members of the Steering Committee chaired drafting subcommittees charged with preparing drafts of individual chapters and collecting the relevant data. Nearly 40 individuals served on these subcommittees, and others provided needed information. It may be useful to ask various units to prepare self-studies in accordance with a common format. While this was a major part of previous UNO self-study processes, it was not done for the 1997 report because of the more extensive program review processes now in effect for the academic departments.

In developing the Self-Study Plan, the Steering Committee should consider preparing an inventory of existing data, reports, and evaluations. It is likely that much of the needed data will be available in existing documents, and there is little benefit in duplicating what is already at hand.

Even at the planning stage, it should be emphasized that a self-study is an *evaluative* process. The self-study necessarily will contain considerable factual information. But these data should serve as the basis for analysis, evaluation, and recommendations for improvement. The goal of self-study is not merely to describe the institution as it exists, but rather to *assess* its strengths and challenges in order to build on its strengths and address its challenges, i.e., to improve itself. To make this happen, the plan must clearly provide for assessment—with special emphasis on the assessment of student academic achievement.

5. Involvement of the President

It is almost axiomatic, but the self-study process requires the ongoing, visible support of the president/chancellor. Only the CEO can make it clear that the process is a top priority of the institution, ensure the active support of all of the main organizational units of the campus, resolve campus-wide issues, and speak authoritatively for the entire institution. CEO operating styles and preferences vary, but at a minimum, the president/chancellor should be kept apprised of the self-study's progress and any significant problems that materialize. A message from the CEO to the campus community prior to the team's arrival should prove helpful in setting the stage for the visit and ensuring that faculty, staff, and students are prepared to interact constructively with the team.

6. Writing the Self-Study Report

Drafting the various chapters of the report likely will prove both laborious and fascinating as writers assemble data, develop insights, identify institutional strengths and areas of concern, and formulate recommendations for improvement. With multiple authors at work, two problems (at least!) are likely to surface here: one is consistency in style, and the other is consistency of data. A style sheet regarding grammar, punctuation, capitalization, organizational conventions, page margins, preferred software, etc., should help to achieve editorial standardization. A published style manual (e.g., the *Chicago Manual of Style)* will serve as a good reference, but a one-two page document will aid in focusing writers' attention on key guidelines and—to the extent that it is followed—simplify the editing process later. Ultimately, the editor must labor sentence by sentence to meld the work of multiple authors into a logical, integrated document that doesn't look like it was written by a committee even though it was.

Many kinds of data change over time and, depending on institutional procedures, may come from multiple sources and be based on varying definitions. Also, drafting the self-study occurs over a span of a year or more, and in many instances more recent data will be available at the final editing stage than at the original drafting stage. But the number of faculty and students, as well as other kinds of data, should be consistent throughout the document. Writers and editors alike must be sensitive to this potential problem and be prepared to make revisions or use updated figures when needed. At a minimum, they should try to agree on a single source and on a specific date for each set of data (e.g,. student credit hours reported by the institutional research office as of the official census date for the spring semester of 1998). Every reasonable effort should be made to supply the most recent data available at the time the self-study and data forms go to press, although some data continually change and a cut-off date inescapably must be set.

As the self-study proceeds, if problems are discovered that are not being attended to they should be brought to the attention of the CEO or other appropriate officer or governance body. The problem might not be resolved by the conclusion of the self-study, but the responsible individual or group should at least be aware of it and be prepared to discuss the institution's response at the time of the visit. It is essential that the self-study not proceed in isolation from the institution's leadership and governance structures.

The Coordinator and Steering Committee should be alert to potential omissions as well as duplication during the writing and editing stages. Put differently, the Self-Study Plan should be revisited throughout the process with an eye to possible omissions as well as duplication. In UNO's case, there was considerable, unanticipated duplication of descriptive information as the various drafting subcommittees addressed the Criteria for Accreditation. Two key omissions also were discovered immediately prior to the final editing process. In addition, care must be taken in both the writing and editing stages to ensure that the Self-Study Report clearly documents that the five Criteria are met.

7. Editing and campus input

Editing is an important component of any significant writing project, and it is all the more essential when the document is the product of a series of committees. A skilled editor with the time—and support of the Steering Committee—to do the task is indispensable to a self-study. The editor may be the Coordinator, another member of the Steering Committee, or a resource person from outside the committee. In UNO's case, the Steering Committee collectively undertook an extensive initial edit of the entire document, focusing primarily on policy and organizational issues. Subsequently, a member of the Steering Committee—a respected senior member of the Department of English, active in university governance and possessed of extraordinary interpersonal relations skills—served as general editor, working closely with the Coordinator.

After the initial committee edit, broader campus input was solicited by distributing the draft to key administrators and faculty leaders (e.g., chancellor, vice chancellors, deans, Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate). In addition, a draft was placed on a web site, together with links to the e-mail addresses of the chairs of the respective drafting subcommittees, to invite input and encourage broader awareness and participation by the campus community. Many of the suggestions received from campus constituents were incorporated into the final draft of the self-study.

At this stage, excessive length may become a problem. Certainly, it was for UNO's self-study. Ultimately, the document totaled 300 pages, but only after extensive rewriting, elimination of duplication, and reduction of non-essential descriptive information. Emphasis on analysis and evaluation rather than description should help to avoid excessive length, but the fine hand of an experienced, determined editor also may prove to be essential.

8. **NCA staff liaison**

   As questions arise in the course of the self-study, the Coordinator should feel free to consult the NCA staff liaison for advice and interpretation of policies and procedures. Initially, the Self-Study Plan should be sent to the liaison for review. The liaison also can be asked to review a draft of the self-study. If needed, the liaison can be invited to visit the campus to aid in the self-study process. In general, the liaison represents a knowledgeable, helpful resource for the institution as it conducts the self-study and prepares for the team visit. A brief visit with the staff liaison at the NCA annual meeting also may be productive.

9. **Communication with campus constituencies**

   A self-study is an institutional process, culminating in a team visit that involves faculty, administrators, staff, and students across the campus. It is essential that campus constituencies be informed about the process—from appointment of the team to the conclusion of the team's visit. Each campus has its own distinctive communication channels and networks; the Steering Committee should utilize them effectively—and perhaps create channels of its own—to ensure that there is broad awareness of the nature, purpose, and status of the self-study process.

10. **Preparing for the team visit**

    Preparation for the Evaluation Team's visit represents a major project in itself and should be carried out with care and attention to detail. The Coordinator or CEO should contact the Team Chair several months before the visit to establish rapport and see if the chair has any specific instructions regarding housing, local transportation arrangements, meetings to be scheduled in advance, computing resource requirements, secretarial support, etc. Alternatively, the chair may take the initiative and contact the Coordinator or CEO. The Team Chair has considerable latitude (and probably experience) in organizing and conducting visits, and the institution should be responsive to the chair's instructions and preferences. In general, the institution should be prepared to arrange comfortable, convenient housing, local transportation, and a team workroom that is accessible in the evening. The institution should plan on meeting team members as they arrive at the local airport and should make every effort to ensure that governing board members, faculty, staff, students, and others are available to meet with the team when needed.

    Although some meetings can be arranged in advance in consultation with the Team Chair, it is likely that a substantial number of meetings will be scheduled during the morning of the first day of the visit. The Coordinator should ensure that secretarial staff will be available for this purpose and prepared to make a flurry of appointments in a relatively brief period of time.

    A resource library containing various documents supplementing the self-study should be organized and located in a convenient place, probably the team's workroom. A suggested list of materials to be included is provided on pp. 78-79 and 143 of the current *Handbook*. Given the NCA's current emphasis on the assessment of student academic achievement, special care should be taken to include all relevant assessment plans and reports. Ideally, planning for the resource library should begin in the early stages of the self-study process and materials systematically collected as they are utilized.

Overall, the self-study process represents an opportunity for an institution to assess itself; reflect on its strengths, challenges, and potential for development; and formulate strategies for improvement. It is a formidable task, but one that can be facilitated by careful planning, attention to the factors outlined above, and a positive attitude and sense of commitment among all participants. As with many challenging committee assignments, a finely-honed sense of humor at stressful times can help, too.

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Actively Involving the College Community Throughout the Self-Study Process

Judith A. Heinen
Christine K. Stephens

The self-study process can be likened to a journey where at times the path is smooth and unencumbered while at others it is filled with myriad obstacles and perils. Like Arthur of Camelot fame, you may have just been dubbed Self-Study Coordinator and sent out on this quest for the good of the kingdom. Perhaps like Arthur you are feeling bewildered, unworthy and unprepared for this daunting charge. Following Arthur's wisdom, your salvation is in those who are on the quest with you. You cannot and should not try to traverse this path or meet this challenge without assistance from all corners of the empire. You will want to set up a round table of brave knights who are prepared to go forth into sometimes unknown territories to secure information and to put to rest concerns about the journey. You would be wise to heed the words of those who have preceded you and to enlist the support of those "merlins" who are at your side to guide you, to bolster your courage, and to keep you on the right path. Your charge will entail sending your knights out in different directions to proclaim the message to the entire realm and to keep it continuously before their eyes. You may even lose some knights along the way, though it is hoped there will be no mortal wounds. Most of all, you will need to be single-minded in your quest and not let your dedication to the challenge wane.

Selecting and Preparing the Steering Committee Members

Your first important task as Self-Study Coordinator is choosing your knights–your self-study Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will be extremely valuable not only in helping to gather needed information but also in setting the tone for the entire study. Generally the chief executive officer makes the appointments in consultation with the Self-Study Coordinator. You will want to include members who are familiar with the institution, who represent various areas of the college, and who have shown leadership among their peers. Strong faculty representation is particularly important since the major focus of the self-study is academic. Equally necessary is a Steering Committee composed of members who have a positive attitude, who can communicate well, and who will assume a participatory role.

The size of the Steering Committee will depend somewhat on the nature of your institution and on the planned organization of your self-study. While the size of the committee will vary, it should assure broad representation while remaining manageable. We had a fairly large committee–fourteen members, including the Coordinator, writer, and an assistant–which made the task easier in some respects and more difficult in others. While there were more hands to accomplish the work, meetings were frequent and fairly long; although the length and frequency of the meetings was due in part to the consensus model we chose to use to accomplish our mission.

Preparing Steering Committee members to assume an active role in involving the institution is an important responsibility of the Self-Study Coordinator. During the orientation, the Coordinator reviews the purposes of the self-study, discusses the Commission's expectations regarding the self-study and the report, outlines the steps for developing a Self-Study Plan and provides the necessary materials to commence the process. From the beginning the Coordinator needs to emphasize the importance of involving all college constituencies in the process and of keeping them apprised of goals, process, and progress. Imparting initial enthusiasm for the task not only to the Steering Committee but also to the entire college community is essential, especially since there will likely be some difficult times along the way. Some institutions have a comprehensive kick-off event, including all employees, which can be very effective in beginning the process. Our Steering Committee at Marygrove decided to use existing faculty, employee, trustee, and student group meetings to impart initial information, reinforce the significance of North Central accreditation, and stress the importance of the self-study and the team visit.

The Coordinator will continually need to build and reinforce commitment to the project through regularly scheduled meetings with the Steering Committee. Support of committee members who are generally volunteers is of primary importance. Although you may not actually meet around a circular table, equality and respect for diverse viewpoints and opinions should reign.

You will also want to elicit ideas from Steering Committee members on ways of engaging the college community in the self-study process. An idea proposed by one of our Steering Committee members was to establish a bulletin board in the foyer of the Liberal Arts Building, with bold letters proclaiming "NCA is Coming! What has happened in the past 10 years?" Colorful markers and cards were supplied so that all members of the college could post their comments. Comments ranged from insightful to frivolous, but we found it a wonderful way to help visualize the process, to get people thinking, to generate some enthusiasm, and to gain information that assisted us in writing a portion of Chapter One.

Establishing the Plan

Once the Steering Committee members have been chosen and oriented to the self-study process, the real work begins. The first task involves establishing the plan. Each plan is different but all will include the purposes of the self-study, a timetable, and the organizational plan for the self-study. You will want the Steering Committee involved in formation of all elements of the plan so there will be true ownership. Each member should have an opportunity to contribute his/her unique perspective as each stage of the plan proceeds. Key decisions include how to gather information and how to organize the self-study. We decided to use existing structures and standing committees to gather information because we concluded that these were our most effective and efficient avenues and we had sufficient groups and committees in place to accomplish our goals.

One of our most difficult decisions was determining how to organize the Steering Committee to gather the needed information. We considered using the five Criteria for Accreditation to provide an organizational scheme because this would make the writing easier. We finally decided to divide the work along functional college lines since existing college groups and committees were organized this way. The Steering Committee was divided into five subcommittees based upon major areas of the college to be examined in the self-study. Each subcommittee consisted of a team of two to three members charged with addressing those aspects of the Criteria for Accreditation pertinent to its area. Teams met with groups and committees, gathered and wrote up information, and submitted it to our writer. We found the team approach to be especially helpful in providing for a division of labor as well as for assuring continuity in the process. Over a two-year period, we lost three of our committee members. Two who left early in the process were replaced and the third was not. Because of this team approach, we did not lose ground when members left and we were able to assimilate new members quickly into the process.

Involving your executive administration in the process from the very beginning is essential. We invited our top three administrators, all of whom had previous self-study experience, to speak to the Steering Committee at one of our first meetings; and we attempted to involve them at every critical juncture. Enlisting the assistance of your North Central Association liaison early in the process is also important. We invited our liaison to a meeting that included the Steering Committee and the top administrators when our plan was completed and ready for review. She gave helpful suggestions and reinforced our commitment to involve and communicate continually with all college constituencies. She also emphasized the need to clearly identify major college concerns in the report, to assume an evaluative approach throughout, and highlighted the usefulness of the SWOT model–identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Distributing Drafts of the Self-Study

Important to the overall process is ensuring that the various drafts of the self-study are readily available to all college personnel for review and comment. In addition to distributing copies to key administrators, faculty department heads, and Board members, we placed copies in the library and encouraged feedback by publicizing the location through the Marygrove campus newspaper. We chose three faculty "readers," all of whom were long-term employees, including two members of the English department, to read the document with a critical eye. We sent a copy of the second draft to our North Central Association liaison for her comments and suggestions.

We received many comments, and attempting to incorporate feedback was one of our most difficult tasks. Some input, particularly that pointing to minor inaccuracies or corrections of error of fact, were easy to incorporate and required only that the writer and Self-Study Coordinator add, delete, or reword. Dealing with other information, particularly contradictory material or sensitive matters, was much more challenging. Our approach was to bring this material to the Steering Committee and determine in that forum how best to incorporate it. In some cases, chief administrators were enlisted to resolve issues.

Finally, you will want to review the findings of the self-study with all college personnel to verify the conclusions, instill a sense of pride and ownership in the document, and enlist their assistance in making needed improvements to the institution. We used faculty and committee meetings, trustee meetings, employee cluster groups, and the college newspaper to accomplish this purpose. Throughout the process, we emphasized the focus on mission and purposes, the 30 action priorities of the College's strategic plan, and the five Criteria for Accreditation.

Engaging in Data Collection

Data collection for the self-study begins with an overall scheme that ensures that all areas of the college are included in assessment and analysis. Marygrove's assessment process, an important part of the broader strategic plan, was intended to be ongoing and to continue well beyond the self-study and team visit. Starting in the spring of 1995, each department at the College was responsible for developing and implementing a unit assessment plan. While the initial focus was on academic departments, administrative and staff areas were also included. The timetable below outlines efforts taken to encourage full faculty participation in both the establishment and implementation of plans for assessment of student learning. Similar efforts were expended to involve administrative and staff units in the assessment process.

- **1992–1995**—Assessment Committee develops Marygrove College Assessment Plan; faculty votes to approve plan.
- **Spring 1995**—North Central Association of Colleges and Schools approves assessment plan.
- **Spring 1995 workshop**—Members of the self-study Steering Committee meet with faculty to discuss assessment plan and relationship to self-study process; Director of Institutional Research/Assessment distributes and reviews guidelines for departmental assessment plans.
- **Fall 1995 workshop**—Outside speaker discusses classroom assessment techniques; faculty meet to develop departmental assessment plans due in October of 1995 by major area; faculty Assessment Committee begins review of departmental assessment plans.
- **Winter 1996**—Academic departments begin implementation of assessment plans.
- **Spring 1996 workshop**—Faculty members from two departments give assessment presentation.
- **Fall 1996 workshop**—Faculty view film on classroom assessment techniques and discuss in small groups techniques they are currently using in their disciplines.
- **Spring and Fall 1996**—Director of Institutional Research/Assessment meets with the head of each major department to give input on assessment plans and make recommendations for implementation.

A second component of the data collection process involves utilizing assessment tools that will elicit evaluative information for the self-study document. A key to successful assessment is to employ a variety of tools that result in both qualitative and quantitative data. As part of the assessment process at Marygrove College, both direct and indirect measures were developed and administered. The direct measures included, but were not limited to, written self-examinations, pre- and post-testing, capstone courses, performance examinations, internships, portfolios, case studies, projects, clinical evaluations, journals, standardized national exams, certification and professional exams, and faculty-adapted classroom assessment tools.

In addition to the direct measures of student learning, indirect assessments of student achievement, teaching, educational services, institutional life, and contributions to the outside community were utilized. These measures included both internally developed instruments and externally developed, standardized surveys that were administered to various groups across the college. Student perceptions and attitudes were measured through a student satisfaction survey, an academic advisor survey, and several graduate-level student opinion surveys. Alumni attitudes were evaluated using an internally developed alumni survey. Faculty and staff responded to a college services survey, an image survey, and a questionnaire regarding contributions to the outside community. The use of both direct and indirect measures resulted in qualitative and quantitative information helpful not only to the self-study committee but also to the College as a whole in its continuing efforts to improve student learning and student and employee services.

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A final aspect of the self-study data collection process involves providing feedback to the college community on the results of various measurements. Marygrove utilized the student newspaper and staff newsletters to publish information both about the self-study process and about surveys that would be conducted. These publications were also used to provide summary results of the various assessments. Additionally, staff and faculty were kept apprised and informed of the results of the evaluative measures through focus group meetings, workshops, and individual departmental meetings.

Interacting with Focus Groups

To create a collegial environment for the self-study process the Steering Committee needs to ensure that all areas have an opportunity to provide qualitative input regarding various aspects of the college and to engage all participants in meaningful discussion regarding the Criteria for Accreditation. Marygrove utilized focus groups as one method to accomplish these objectives. As indicated previously, College committees, boards, councils, and offices were used as means of disseminating information on the self-study. These constituencies also served as focus groups for gathering qualitative data about the College. At the beginning of the process questions were generated specific to each group including the Board of Trustees, executive officers, faculty, academic units, academic councils and committees, staff cluster groups, staff offices, and student groups. Teams from the Steering Committee met with the various focus groups to discuss the questions and record comments for incorporation into the study.

Focus group discussions directed the attention of the campus community to the College's mission and purposes as well as to the goals of the self-study. These discussions also served to illustrate to College groups the impact they had on the self-study process and the results of their efforts in this cooperative undertaking. The distribution of handouts on the College mission, the strategic plan, the Criteria for Accreditation, and the summary of strengths and targets for growth resulting from the self-study process helped to guide these discussions. The focus group meetings further enhanced the self-study effort by identifying for the various constituencies the changes that resulted from the self-study process and helped create an atmosphere of interaction and cooperation necessary for the successful completion of the self-study.

Preparing for the Team Visit

Throughout the self-study process not only oral but also written means of communication are used to keep the college informed and updated as well as to prepare the college for the upcoming visit. Communications need to be focused, clear, and frequent enough to keep the college community involved and interested but not so often as to lose their impact. As the accreditation visit approaches communication efforts are intensified. In addition to disseminating copies of the self-study, you will want to circulate the tentative schedule and publicize names and pertinent information regarding the team members. In various communications we also emphasized the importance of staff and faculty presence on campus during the team visit and encouraged availability to speak with team members.

Perhaps the most important preparation for the team visit is encouraging a positive spirit and a collaborative effort. One Steering Committee member suggested we adopt an attitude of preparing for guests invited into our home. This idea caught fire at our college: many engaged in efforts to organize files, clean window sills, and straighten up offices "in preparation for our guests." The upcoming visit spurred one Steering Committee member to take the initiative to obtain framed copies of the College mission statement to hang permanently in each building, something she had wanted to do for years. Others put up displays and prepared attractive bulletin boards. Though some of these preparations were perhaps unnecessary the positive attitude they fostered was considerable.

The Steering Committee spent a significant amount of time setting up a resource room that included appropriate information from all segments of the College. Each subcommittee enlisted administrators, office personnel, and committee chairs to gather data, minutes of meetings, promotional materials, and historical documents pertinent to their focus areas. Steering committee members and assistants then labeled and filed materials so that they could be easily accessed, and designed a resource room guide that was distributed to all team members.

An important preparatory aspect involves communicating with the Team Chair regarding hotel and other arrangements for the team's stay, needed materials and equipment for the resource room, and the schedule for the visit. Although the schedule is the prerogative of the Team Chair, ours was most receptive to suggestions. Support staff play a key role in assisting the Evaluation Team in coordinating schedules and in various other communications. Those staff members assigned to the team need to be familiar with operations at the college and oriented to the particulars of the visit. They must also be flexible and available to meet team needs. Finally, it is important to afford personnel from all key areas of the college an opportunity to meet with one of the team members. The team members have a grueling schedule while on campus and may miss an individual or committee deemed important by your college. It is the Coordinator's responsibility to keep his/her finger on the pulse of the institution and bring significant omissions to the Team Chair's attention.

The self-study process at your institution may not result in finding the holy grail or in transforming your institution into a Camelot where "the rain may never fall 'til after sundown and by eight the morning fog must disappear..." Ideally, though, it will lead to a strengthened sense of mission and purpose, to improvements in your college or university, and to its initial or continued accreditation by the North Central Association. You may encounter some setbacks and roadblocks on your journey, but if you actively involve your college community throughout the process, your path is likely to be clearer and your end result more fulfilling.

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Things I Wish I Had Known: The Musings of a Retired Self-Study Coordinator

James Colman

Introduction

In the spring of 1995, Cedarville College began a two-year self-study process that culminated in a successful site visit in the spring of 1997. I was asked by the Academic Vice President to serve as the Self-Study Coordinator. Although I knew absolutely nothing about institutional accreditation, I agreed to serve. Thus began a two-year learning curve that wound through a series of things that worked and things that didn't work. I vividly recall my first visit to the NCA Annual Meetings and the pre-conference sessions for new Self-Study Coordinators. I came to realize that when I was done with leading the self-study efforts, I would need either a sabbatical or a psychiatrist! This presentation is a light-hearted attempt to encourage new Self-Study Coordinators with information that I learned as the institutional coordinator for the Cedarville College continued accreditation self-study.

Getting Started

Needless to say, my initial exposure to the self-study process was overwhelming. There was so much information to grasp without any prior foundation upon which to build. Looking back on this part of the self-study, several important lessons come to mind.

◇ **Read the instructions!**

This encouragement seems so mundane, but, in this modern era of plug-and-play technology, many of us attempt to dive right in without reading the instructions. The first thing I needed to do was to get a full understanding of the requirements of the task at hand. I spent considerable time reviewing the NCA *Handbook of Accreditation* and the self-studies of other institutions to figure out suggested methods and to see the ways in which other institutions had implemented these suggestions.

◇ **Organize well**

The organization of the entire project is dependent on the organization of the Coordinator. Determine the overall organization of the project before you even select committee members.

◇ **Don't even think about the final document**

At this stage of the project, don't spend a lot of time worrying about the final Self-Study Report. Focus on designing the best plan for gathering the data you need to show the current state of your institution. When this goal is achieved, generating the final report will occur naturally.

◇ **Choose wisely**

The admonition given to Indiana Jones in the movies also holds true for selecting leaders of self-study committees. Be careful to choose individuals with demonstrated leadership ability, organizational skills, and punctuality. It will save you a great deal of time later in the process if you can rely on your leaders to complete their assignments.

Making Progress

Once the ball is rolling, it's important to keep things moving forward. Maintaining momentum is essential to the process. Over time, the self-study will tend to lose its freshness, so you must constantly keep it in front of your constituents. Here are a few tips I picked up.

- **Communication is the next best thing to being there!**

  You can't possibly interact on a personal basis with all the individuals who have a vested interest in the self-study process. Therefore, you must come up with ways to communicate the data in a concise fashion that will keep these individuals informed. I found that the newsletter approach worked very well. I produced a newsletter about every two to four weeks during the last two to three months prior to the team visit. The newsletter once again explained the self-study process and gave an opportunity to talk about the success of the subcommittees, the credentials of the Evaluation Team, and the events of the team visit. The faculty and staff responded very favorably to this information and felt well-informed as the team arrived.

  A second important means of communication was the campus computer network. Periodic mass e-mails to the entire campus family kept them abreast of the progress and any needs that surfaced. The campus network also became very important when the final report was completed. Drafts of the report were made available to the committee members and the final draft was provided for all interested parties for review prior to approval.

  It was difficult to generate much interest in large-group presentations. Once the initial self-study was presented to the entire College family, electronic and written communication became the primary means of information exchange.

- **The "Little Red Hen" syndrome**

  This syndrome sometimes occurs when a Self-Study Coordinator seeks volunteers to help with various parts of the process. Nobody wants to bake the bread, but everyone wants to eat it. Self-Study Coordinators need to prepare creative ways to encourage others to participate and stay active.

Writing the Document

Completing the final self-study document is one of the most immense tasks required of Coordinators. It is at this point in the process that all the planning and organization pay off. The original plan for the Cedarville College self-study called for each subcommittee, of which there were four, to write a report addressing resources, assessment, planning, or institutional integrity. The Coordinator wrote the section on institutional mission and planned to link it with the information contained in the other reports. While this seemed like a good plan, it was not totally successful. Here are a few ideas that worked and some that were learned along the way.

- **Get good writers**

  Be sure the leaders of subcommittees or other entities that will write parts of the final document have the skill of communicating through a written format. It is incorrect to assume that all academicians write well.

- **Plan for delays**

  You will encounter delays throughout the process. Plan on them and they will not cause your stress levels to rise. Assume that data will get lost. Expect that reports will be late. Plan for errors or delays at the print shop. Planning for these things makes your task so much easier when they don't happen!

- **Write things that you would want to read**

  Often, institutions feel pressure to inundate an Evaluation Team with voluminous amounts of data in an effort to fulfill any possible criteria that the team might establish. In many cases, this is overkill. Place yourself in the position of an Evaluation Team member. Would you rather read two volumes of information covering every piece of data on every subject or one volume of concise, clearly written information? The NCA is very clear concerning the information that is required for accreditation. The self-study should address these requirements as clearly and succinctly as possible. Then, when the team members visit, they can quickly ask for any detailed data that are needed to answer a question that has arisen as they have read the document.

Maintaining Perspective

So how can one keep a balance between all that is required as a Self-Study Coordinator and the day-to-day requirements of a full-time job? If they don't already know, educating the administrators concerning the amount of time the task will take is important. At Cedarville, the academic vice president gave the Coordinator half-time release for the two academic years of the self-study. During the first year, this was plenty of time to accomplish the required tasks. The crunch came in the second year as all the parts had to come together. Time gets especially precious during the last three months prior to the team visit since all the meeting coordination for the Evaluation Team is added into the mix. Self-Study Coordinators should have key volunteers ready to assist and pick up some of the overload during this crucial time.

The need for help is perhaps the most important aspect of maintaining balance. No Self-Study Coordinator can do the job alone. It requires the efforts of many people. Successful Coordinators are those who can gather a strong support system. This support allows the Coordinator to focus on the larger picture and to keep things on track without getting bogged down with the details.

When all the planning and work comes together, the team visit is very enjoyable. The members of the Evaluation Team are colleagues who desire to communicate and share the common bond of higher education. Once the work is done, take advantage of the team visit. It's the start of a very well-deserved respite that will, I hope, last for ten years!

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Ready, Set, Go!
Starting Blocks for a Successful Self-Study

Linda M. Schurmann
Nancy Iverson

Lake Area Technical Institute is a public institution located in northeastern South Dakota. One of four technical institutes in the state, it serves technical education needs for approximately 1400 students each year. Preparation for the NCA evaluation for continued accreditation in February 1997 began with the appointment of Self-Study Coordinators in 1994. The process culminated with Commission action continuing the institution's accreditation and scheduling the next comprehensive evaluation in ten years. Self-study, however, continues as the institution moves into the future.

The successful self-study achieved by LATI is due, in large part, to extensive planning processes that provided solid starting blocks for the self-study process. These crucial planning steps are summarized into three starting blocks for success:

- ○ Block One: Attending NCA Pre-Conference Workshops/Annual Meetings
- ○ Block Two: Selecting the Steering Committee
- ○ Block Three: Inservice and Orientation for Subcommittee Members

These three starting blocks to success can assist new Coordinators as they begin the self-study process on their own campus.

Block 1: Attending NCA Pre-Conference Workshops/Annual Meetings

We began our work as Self-Study Coordinators in the same year that the North Central Association initiated its Pre-Conference Workshops on Self-Study. These workshops were specially designed for persons who were conducting the self-study and writing the report within the next three years. Mentor groups were also established so that new Coordinators could meet with other new Coordinators from institutions similar in size and purpose. These groups would be facilitated by experienced Coordinators from similar institutions that had recently completed self-study.

The information gained in the Pre-Conference Workshops and Mentor Groups was invaluable in achieving a successful evaluation process. We are pleased to have the opportunity to act as mentors this year for new Self-Study Coordinators who may face the same unanswered questions and uncertainties that we had in 1995. The guidance, handouts, and support we received were key components in our eventual success.

Effective use of the Annual Meeting Self-Study Resource Room and the Self-Study Fair were added features that enhanced our abilities on our own campus. We examined self-study documents from other institutions and received valuable ideas for a table of contents, committee structure, arrangement of the self-study document, format and style of the document, and many others. We learned so much from our colleagues through observation of their completed self-studies and discussions regarding processes on their campuses that facilitated our own self-study.

Development of a timeline and pre-document were facilitated by the *Handbook of Accreditation* and the information gained through our mentor meetings and pre-conference workshops. We worked in our mentor groups to develop these documents that served as the framework for the entire self-study process that followed on our own campus.

Opportunities to network with NCA staff, particularly the institution's liaison, are also a benefit to new Coordinators. Discussion, information and question/answer sessions with NCA staff, or informal meetings in the hallways or at receptions, put faces to names. Later phone calls or other correspondence by e-mail or snail mail can be more comfortable. We met with our staff liaison each time we attended an Annual Meeting. This process eased the way for continued communication throughout the self-study process.

Both Self-Study Coordinators attended the NCA Pre-Conferences/Annual Meetings in 1995 and 1996 and the Annual Meeting in 1997. We learned something new and valuable each time that made the trip and time expended worthwhile. These workshops and meetings were a major key to success.

Block Two: Selecting the Steering Committee

Lake Area Technical Institute had been involved in strategic planning and participatory management since 1990. A small group of individuals that represented each area within the campus served as the central committee for planning and management called Pathways 2005. This was a natural choice for our self-study Steering Committee. The committee is made up of five faculty representatives from each division within the institution: general education, agriculture, business, technology, and health; five representatives from support staff; and five representatives from administration. These 15 people worked closely with the Self-Study Coordinators throughout the self-study process. Pathways 2005 assisted in the establishment of subcommittees (several members served on these subcommittees as well); in development and evaluation of the self-study documents; in inservice and orientation for faculty, staff, and students; and reached decisions by consensus providing direction for the Self-Study Coordinators. This was a true collaboration, since information gained from Annual Meetings could be shared with this group, which was most active in the daily operations of the campus. The group's feedback was crucial to a successful start for self-study on Lake Area's campus. The Steering Committee was responsible for determining the scope and design of the self-study document. Most importantly, the Steering Committee affirmed the goal of self-study, which is continuous institutional improvement.

The Steering Committee received orientation and inservice from the Self-Study Coordinators, and in turn, provided support and orientation/inservice to subcommittees, students, board members, and the community. LATI was extremely fortunate to have a committee of appropriate size, representation, and experience already gathered that could assume a leadership position for a long-term commitment such as self-study. Other institutions may find the model useful, particularly in the campus representation provided.

Block Three: Inservice and Orientation for Subcommittee Members

The Steering Committee and Self-Study Coordinators identified subcommittees that included those listed below. A review of committees at other institutions (information available in the Self-Study Resource Room at the NCA Annual Meeting) assisted in determining a subcommittee structure that was best suited to Lake Area's unique needs.

- History, Mission, Vision
- Governance and Administration
- Human Resources
- Financial Resources
- Assessment of Quality
- Educational Programs
- Student Services
- Physical Resources

In May 1995, all employees met for NCA inservice. Employees completed a SWOT analysis, were divided randomly into facilitated groups that compiled results and discussed their SWOT analysis. Data from the groups were presented in the larger assembly. Employees were then asked to volunteer for one of the eight committees listed above. LATI is proud to observe that more than 90% of its employees made a commitment to serve and participate. Even though we are a small institution, 90% participation in committee work is an achievement worthy of respect. As Self-Study Coordinators, we believe that the subsequent self-study document and scheduling of the next comprehensive evaluation in ten years are direct results of employee ownership and commitment. While smaller committees and subcommittees are certainly easier to manage, few institutions can state that the self-study is truly representative of its employees.

Self-study committees identified areas of concentration through careful study of the Criteria and the patterns of evidence as provided in the *Handbook of Accreditation*. Many developed subcommittees that researched specific areas or patterns of evidence. Committee leaders met regularly with each other, Self-Study Coordinators, and Pathways 2005 to report progress. Committees brainstormed, researched, surveyed, charted, and reported their findings to the Steering Committee and Self-Study Coordinators, a process that lasted from September through April. Committees were again called upon to review and evaluate the self-study document, recommending changes as necessary.

Ready, Set, Go! Planning Develops a Solid Foundation

Experience is a great teacher. However, most new Self-Study Coordinators lack experience in the specific process necessary for continued accreditation since, if an institution is fortunate, the experience rolls around only every 10 years or so! The process of self-study can be extremely intimidating and overwhelming for the inexperienced Coordinator. The starting blocks to success described above will not take the place of experience, but they can provide the Coordinator with tools that can be developed for a successful self-study. These tools, combined with the Coordinator's unique knowledge of her/his institution and skills and experience in higher education, can provide a solid starting block as the race begins for a successful continued accreditation process.

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Using the Self-Study as an Opportunity for Institutional Renewal

Jack J. Becherer
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Conducting an institutional self-study is time consuming, demanding work. The process typically takes between one and two years and includes countless hours of planning, discussion, data gathering and analysis, information organization, development of conclusions, and writing. The primary motive behind the self-study is initial or continued accreditation. To assert anything else would be to ignore the obvious. The pursuit of initial or continued accreditation, however, demands among other things, clarification of mission, review of institutional strengths and weaknesses, identification of issues of concern, and conceptualization of future direction. As such, the self-study process provides an excellent opportunity for institutional renewal.

Moraine Valley Community College embarked on its self-study in 1994 in preparation for a continued accreditation visit scheduled for March 1996. Although the college had received a very positive report during its prior comprehensive evaluation in 1986, many of the faculty who participated in that process expressed dissatisfaction with the experience, citing what they perceived to be undue control from administration regarding what was included in the final written report. These feelings contributed to a general reluctance to become involved in the current self-study, as well as a cynical view of the value of the entire process of review and evaluation. Therefore, securing and maintaining the trust of the participants became a priority before, during, and after the evaluation process was complete.

Understanding its history, the college initiated a self-study process intending to renew internal energies and clarify future directions. Using the theme of institutional renewal and a focus on the impact that the college has on its students, Moraine Valley garnered the involvement of more than 175 faculty, staff members, students, and community representatives to conduct a self-study that the participants determined would make a difference in improving the quality of instruction and support services. The following processes and activities were employed to maximize the value of the self-study process to the college community.

Defining a Focus for the Self-Study

At the onset of the self-study process, one faculty leader stated, "I don't give a damn about what the NCA thinks about this college; what I care about is how my students are learning." These strong words articulate a perspective that accreditation is an unnecessary activity that detracts from the teaching-learning process at the college. Defining a focus that even the most skeptical of staff members can relate to can minimize the impact of this perspective. Towards this end, the core focus of the Moraine Valley self-study was "the student," specifically, the impact of college programs and services on student outcomes and student success. Everyone involved in the self-study was continuously encouraged to evaluate institutional actions against this core focus. By doing so, the value of the long and demanding review was more apparent to the classroom teacher, and staff participation in the process was more willingly achieved.

Challenging the College Community to Make the Most of the Opportunity

The following excerpt from an article written by Terry O'Banion titled "Sustaining Innovation in Teaching and Learning," was included in the charge to the NCA Steering Committee and Study Groups.

> Sadly, some colleges that were highly innovative in the 60s and 70s have lost the innovative spirit today. Other colleges and their faculties, constrained by limited travel funds and a general malaise that pervades many community colleges in difficult economic times, are apt to turn inward and become disconnected from the national community of innovators that energize themselves and each other. . . As that happens, the danger is that the college's innovative core will begin to wither. Once the core is disenchanted, considerable thought and a great deal of action are required to renew a college's innovative spirit.

Although the faculty and staff of Moraine Valley view themselves as part of an exemplary institution that is committed to advancing student academic achievement, many, if not most, could relate to these powerful words. The college maintains a substantial number of faculty who have been with the college since its inception. Thus, the words "renewing Moraine Valley's innovative spirit" served as a frequent reminder of the potential impact of a thorough and honest institutional review.

Appointing the Self-Study Chairs

The most important initial action may be the appointment of the self-study co-chairs. The chairpersons will be the champions of the self-study process. As such, they must be highly organized and energized individuals able to take an institutional perspective. In addition, they will need to motivate and direct the Steering Committee as well as the self-study groups. They must be seen as knowledgeable about key issues, willing to listen to various perspectives and credible to their colleagues. A propensity for creativity and a sense of humor will assist in overcoming inevitable roadblocks and obstacles in the self-study process. Finally, an ability to write and integrate the contributions of various people will be essential when preparing the final report.

At Moraine Valley, an instructional dean was paired with a professor of art as co-chairs of the self-study process. Both met the criteria noted in the preceding paragraph. In addition, the professor of art had been a key participant as well as an occasional critic of the 1986 self-study. Clearly viewed as a faculty leader, she could encourage the involvement of her colleagues. Her presence as co-chair conveyed a commitment to the faculty that the self-study would be honest and objective.

The instructional dean also brought unique skills to her position as co-chair. Keen relational skills combined with a superb task orientation to move complex projects involving various perspectives to closure. In addition, the dean's secretary was willing to serve as a recorder for the Steering Committee, providing a critical service while keeping this group organized and informed.

Selecting the Steering Committee

The composition of the Steering Committee dictated the direction and energy of the self-study. A mix of seasoned veterans and new employees was selected; the veterans provided a historical perspective of the college while the new staff members shared fresh views. The Steering Committee represented all employee groups and divisions of the college, including support staff and part-time faculty. Appointment to the self-study Steering Committee served as recognition of importance to the college. As such, members felt special to be a part of the group, and these feelings served as motivation to perform the difficult work ahead. In accepting a position on the Steering Committee, members acknowledged their role in representing their peers as well as the opportunity to renew the spirit of the institution. Members of the Steering Committee clearly understood the mission and purposes of the self-study and were committed to viewing the process as one of institutional renewal rather than task management.

Examining "Hot Button Issues"

Every college has issues that will stimulate discussion and stir debate. Examination of these issues as part of the self-study serves to increase participation among faculty and staff, while sending a message that important but potentially sensitive topics will not be ignored. At Moraine Valley, considerable discussion ensued regarding academic and institutional integrity, specifically documenting ways that the college does what it purports to do. The work of the Institutional Integrity Self-Study Group culminated in a presentation at the 1995 NCA Annual Meeting as well as the publication of a paper titled, "Looking for the Big I: The Search for Institutional Integrity."

Other "hot button" topics reviewed at Moraine Valley during the self-study included establishing meaningful systems to examine institutional effectiveness and assess student academic achievement and consideration of the college's diligence in incorporating technology into the curriculum. Although these complex issues seldom have definitive

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answers, their examination attests to the intent of the college to conduct a comprehensive and honest review, rather than avoid the sensitive issues, and present a positive even though incomplete picture to the Evaluation Team.

Creating Cohesive and Functional Self-Study Groups

The self-study groups comprise the core of a college's internal review. Each group, with its assigned emphasis, will determine the issues requiring review, gather and analyze input and data, address the General Institutional Requirements and Criteria for Accreditation, and determine the impact of college operations on student success. The quality of the self-study groups dictates the strength of the self-study. Therefore, great care must be taken to create groups that will successfully address their complex, critical charges.

At Moraine Valley, each member of the NCA Steering Committee assumed the responsibility to co-chair one of the nine self-study groups. The self-study groups ranged from 15 to 20 members, mostly volunteers, although the job responsibilities of some members determined their self-study group placement. Several members of the Board of Trustees served on self-study groups, as did students and community members. In all cases, care was taken to blend new and experienced staff members, action-oriented individuals with those holding passionate perspectives, dreamers with those with a proclivity to get things done.

The co-chairs of each self-study group conveyed the intent to conduct a thorough, honest, and objective review. Each self-study group reported to one of the co-chairs of the Steering Committee, who monitored the activities of the group, reminded the groups of deadlines, and informed the group of possible duplication of effort. Those self-study groups with a predominant instructional focus reported to the professor of art. Those groups with an administrative focus worked with the instructional dean. Hours of careful planning and coordination paid off, as the self-study groups united behind their charges and developed into effective and functional work groups.

Combining Tradition, Ritual, and Humor to Inform and Involve the College Community

One of the most successful strategies in conducting a self-study to promote institutional renewal is the use of tradition, ritual, and humor. Moraine Valley conducts a college-wide in-service at the beginning of every semester. The in-service provided a forum for the self-study Steering Committee to gather input and ideas from faculty and staff and to inform staff of the activities and conclusions of the self-study groups. However, rather than present information in a traditional manner, such as using a panel or a presenter, the Steering Committee went to great lengths to tie into the college's history, to hold ceremonies, and to make people laugh. In the process, attention was drawn to activities that make Moraine Valley a unique learning community, while poking fun at issues of conflict or indecision, and reflecting on activities that could be improved. Paramount was the need for members of the college community to recognize that self-evaluation was taking place and for the Steering Committee to keep them abreast of its progress without using customary methods of reporting.

Some of the ways to use tradition, ritual and humor include:

- Writing a poem that captures the history of the college, while referring to key faculty and staff, major milestones, and significant events
- Highlighting outstanding efforts of faculty and staff that epitomize dedication to students and community
- Changing the title of the song "YMCA" to "YNCA" and asking everyone at the in-service to sing and dance to the tune
- Portraying the NCA Steering Committee as members of the Moraine Valley "Dream Team" (referring to the Olympic basketball team), with accompanying player and team photos
- Presenting the President with a bottle of champagne at a formal, college-wide meeting, to be opened when the NCA evaluation is completed
- Conveying the conclusions of the self-study groups using a TV talk show format (ala Oprah) with the host "Ms. Nora Central"
- Including a group photo of the Steering Committee in the conclusion of the self-study document

- ○ Asking members of the Steering Committee to sign the request for continued accreditation as a way to document their ownership of the contents of the self-study
- ○ Recognizing participants at a luncheon, and giving Steering Committee members a framed montage that documented the reaffirmation of accreditation as another milestone for the college

Recalling past achievements and laughing about current events creates a positive impression regarding the self-study and unites people to consider ways that institutional review can lead to renewal.

Summary

Looking back on the institutional self-study and the 1996 accreditation visit, what did the college achieve? The most tangible result was continued accreditation with no stipulations and the next review scheduled in ten years, about which one member of the Steering Committee quipped "provided the greatest possible length of time till the college had to begin its next self-study." Signs touting "The Perfect 10" appeared around the campus. However, more was accomplished than the recognition of continued accreditation. For example, each self-study committee developed strengths and recommendations regarding its assigned area of review. These strengths acknowledged the good work of the college, while the recommendations clarified areas where improvement was needed. In fact, the recommendations of the self-study groups have served as more powerful change agents than the concerns identified by the NCA Evaluation Team, attesting to the value of thoughtful internal review. And remember that cynical faculty leader? He changed his mind about the value of the self-study after observing the positive staff reactions in college-wide forums held to seek input into the process.

In many ways, the self-study brought the college community together. Faculty, administrators, and support staff took time from their busy schedule to meet, analyze, review, critique, and talk to each other. The self-study, at times, seemed an intellectual interlude in a fast-paced organization. The process was collaborative, the spirit was high, and the ideas were constructive. Many self-study groups debated whether issues should be placed in the self-study or internally addressed, conveying a recognition that college operations were basically sound, and that the identified need for improvement didn't need the "force of an accreditation body" to receive attention. At the conclusion of the self-study, nary an individual could be found who questioned the college's "right" to be reaccredited.

The confidence of the college community, as well as the thoughtfulness of the lengthy self-study, was apparent to the NCA Evaluation Team. The evaluation visit appeared anti-climatic for the 175 people who did so much to prepare for the three-day visit. This is as it should be, for the value of a self-study will inevitably lie in the effort that comes from within the campus community, rather than from comments of the external Evaluation Team.

Moraine Valley did achieve some degree of institutional renewal as a result of its self-study, and college camaraderie was strengthened. However, renewal is an ongoing process, and the college continues to seek avenues to actively and progressively pursue its mission to educate the whole person and to promote student success through the refinement of programs and services. With a renewed human spirit, difficult problems have become a bit easier to solve, and a focus on "the student" continues to influence decision-making in the institution.

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Organizing and Selling the Self-Study Process to the University Community

Christa Walck

Successfully completing a Self-Study Report depends upon teamwork among many members at an institution. One of the most important aspects of teamwork is developing a clear structure for the team (Hirschhorn 1991). Team members need to know their task and roles. Time spent by leaders early in the process developing and communicating a vision of the teamwork process and the final product that is expected from the team will save teams from false starts and unproductive meetings. These teamwork concepts can be applied to the self-study process. The more structure the Self-Study Coordinator and Steering Committee can provide at the outset for the many institutional members that will conduct the self-study, and the more widely expectations for the self-study process can be communicated to the institution as a whole, the greater the likelihood of keeping the self-study process on track toward successful completion. Another way of talking about structure and communication is organizing and selling. Organizing and selling the self-study process during the first few months is critical to its success.

This paper will describe what we did at Michigan Tech during the early phase of our self-study process to organize and sell the process to the Michigan Tech community. Briefly, in the winter of 1996, we selected a Coordinator who attended the NCA Annual Meeting; the Coordinator worked with the Executive Vice President and Provost, Director of Budget and Planning, and Assessment Coordinator to develop a Steering Committee during the spring of 1996; the Steering Committee met regularly during the summer of 1996 to develop the structure for the self-study process; and in early fall 1996 we sold it to the university community through a series of meetings with important university constituencies.

In particular, five actions taken in the late summer and early fall of the first year of our self-study were crucial to creating the structure and getting buy-in from nearly 100 people on campus who were highly involved in the self-study process. These five actions were:

1. selecting the Steering Committee and subcommittees
2. creating written committee charges to guide committee work
3. developing a SWOT analysis to focus committees and departments on evaluation
4. conducting an orientation to distribute information and create buy-in
5. publicizing the process widely

Selecting the Steering Committee and Subcommittees

Michigan Tech chose to organize its self-study around its eight Strategic Goals (see our self-study web page at http://www.admin.mtu.edu/admin/nca/). In order to evaluate all eight Strategic Goals and several subgoals, we decided to create ten subcommittees, called "Goal Committees (GCs)." The Steering Committee included the chairs of these GCs, the Self-Study Coordinator, the Provost, and the Director of Budget and Planning. We decided that the chair of each GC had to be knowledgeable about the goal, capable of managing a diverse committee, and able to write and deliver her/his GC report on time. We also wanted diversity on the Steering Committee—both gender and ethnic diversity—and faculty as well as staff, since the self-study process should be faculty-driven. After carefully selecting the Steering Committee to meet these criteria in spring 1996, we charged GC chairs with identifying GC members and bringing their choices to the full Steering Committee for discussion. After several rounds of discussion, we agreed upon a broad and diverse cross-section of faculty, staff, and students for the ten GCs.

Distributing responsibility for selecting GC members allowed us to share institutional knowledge about appropriate individuals for the task, balance the committees more effectively, and develop buy-in among Steering Committee members about the process.

Creating Written Committee Charges to Guide Committee Work

The Coordinator had mapped out a brisk timeline for completing the self-study, which required that GC reports be completed by May 1997. While nine months seemed like plenty of time to develop these reports, a growing culture of participation at Michigan Tech had left many members of the institution feeling "burnt-out" on committee work. We therefore wanted to minimize unproductive meetings. Moreover, since none of the Steering Committee or GC members had previous experience with a self-study, and since we had not chosen the common route of organizing the self-study and committee structure around the NCA Criteria, it was clear that we needed a method for getting the 86 members of the GC committees rapidly up to speed on the self-study process.

We chose to develop very specific charges for each GC that identified the purpose of the GC, data that should be gathered to complete its report, and questions to be answered. Each charge was organized around the five NCA Criteria (for a sample charge, see Figure 1). GC chairs developed their initial drafts and brought them to the Steering Committee, which reviewed and compared them to eliminate overlaps and assure coverage of all topics pertinent to the self-study process. These charges created the structure for GC work by setting clear expectations about the task, and suggesting a framework for assigning roles to GC members.

Developing a SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a standard strategic planning tool that asks planners to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) to an organization. This analysis requires evaluation of the organization. We mandated a SWOT analysis (see Figure 2) as the standard method for summarizing the results of GC reports, as well as departmental self-study reports. Thus, in addition to the written charge to each committee, the SWOT analysis provided a consistent structure for the self-study process across the GCs, and it focused them clearly on the task of evaluating the institution, not simply describing it. When University departments were charged with writing departmental self-study reports to provide data for the GCs, they also organized their reports around the University Strategic Goals and SWOTs, replicating the structure. Later, when the Steering Committee read and discussed drafts of GC reports, the SWOTs were scrutinized for consistency with the text of the report. The Steering Committee concluded the self-study process by utilizing the GC SWOTs to develop a SWOT for the University as a whole. Thus throughout the self-study process, SWOT analysis created a specific structure for the task, and set clear expectations for results.

Conducting an Orientation to Distribute Information and Create Buy-In

During the first week of the 1996/97 academic year, a three-hour orientation for all 86 GC members was held on a Saturday morning. Binders were distributed to each member with pertinent information on the self-study process, including the timeline for completion, the pertinent GC charge, and the SWOT analysis. The President welcomed everyone and provided introductory remarks to develop buy-in among the members. The Self-Study Coordinator provided an overview of the self-study process and answered questions. The members of each GC then had an hour for their first GC meeting to discuss their charge with the chair and work out logistics. After a summer of preparation, the chairs were knowledgeable about the process and clear about their GC charge, so they could communicate effectively with their committee members.

Publicizing the Process Widely

The orientation produced nearly a hundred people across campus who were conversant with the self-study process, but buy-in needed to be even greater if the GC members were going to get the support of the University community to gather the necessary data. During the first two months of the academic year, the Coordinator met with many groups across campus to explain the self-study process and request their support: the University Senate, Undergraduate Student Government, Graduate Student Council, Academic Deans and Directors, Department Chairs, and the Board of Control. University publications such as the student newspaper and University newsletter published articles about the self-study. A web page was dedicated to the self-study, which anyone with internet access could find easily from the University home page. The web page had e-mail links to all Steering Committee and GC members, provided an overview of the self-study process, and served as a place to post draft reports for university-wide review. In addition, all University departments, including academic, academic support, and administrative units, wrote self-study reports, and a departmental committee (not the department chair or unit director) was requested to develop these reports. This also widened the circle of participation and generated awareness of and interest in the University self-study process.

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Appendix A

Goal 2: Attract, Retain, Support, and Develop Excellent Faculty

General Charge: Faculty are central to the University's mission in teaching and research, and they bear major roles in governance and service. Attracting, sustaining, and developing faculty is a process conducted over time. Steps in the process include recruitment and hiring, faculty orientation, faculty development, promotion and tenure, and the faculty reward structure. The process as a whole should promote and sustain excellent teaching, research, and service, the three criteria for promotion and tenure. The way in which MTU values teaching, research, and service is a subject for our self-study. Since faculty excellence integrates all three, the process should strengthen them all.

The committee will evaluate how well the University is meeting the projected targets outlined in the University's Strategic Plan. It will also specifically address the following five North Central Association (NCA) Criteria. The committee report will be completed by March 31, 1997.

Criterion 1: The University has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education.

What does the University propose to accomplish?

TASKS:

- ☐ Review University, College/School, and Departmental strategic goals and mission statements for faculty hiring, retention, support, and development objectives.
- ☐ Review College/School and Departmental tenure and promotion guidelines and merit pay guidelines.
- ☐ Identify other relevant documents.

QUESTIONS:

1. Are goals for faculty consistent with the major mission statements of the University?
2. Are departmental and Colleges/School plans regarding faculty specific and concrete?
3. Are there University-wide patterns of values for faculty excellence?

Criterion 2: The University has effectively organized the human, financial and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes.

How does the University propose to accomplish it?

TASKS:

- ☐ Survey academic units (Departments, Colleges/Schools) regarding their programs, decision-making processes, human, and financial resources for attracting, retaining, supporting, and developing faculty.
- ☐ Identify all programs and processes, including informal processes, in the following areas:
  - advertising, recruiting, and networking to get pools of faculty for searches;
  - searches and selecting;
  - negotiating terms with new hires: start-up conditions; spousal hires; relocation issues

QUESTIONS:

1. Are programs and processes adequate in all areas? Do informal processes need to be supplemented by formal procedures?
2. Are the human and financial resources adequate for attracting, retaining, supporting, and developing excellent faculty? Do faculty salaries, support, and reward systems show a commitment to hiring and retaining excellent faculty? How does MTU compare to benchmark institutions?

Criterion 3: The University is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.

Has the University accomplished it?

TASKS:

☐ Identify existing documentation, develop quantitative measures, and identify representative examples of our accomplishment in the following activities:
  - Attracting, retaining, supporting, and developing faculty.
  - Faculty diversity (attraction, retention, support, and development).
  - Teaching and research excellence (outcomes, number/distribution of faculty involved).

QUESTIONS:

1. Is the University meeting its goals for attracting, retaining, supporting, and developing excellent faculty? Do we need to clarify our goals and objectives?
2. What are the University's strengths and weaknesses in teaching, research, and service?
3. How diverse is our faculty? How does MTU compare to benchmark institutions?

Criterion 4: The University can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.

Can the University continue to accomplish it?

TASKS:

☐ Review University, College/School, and Departmental strategic plans for faculty hiring, retention, support, and development.

☐ Identify programs and processes that are well-supported and growing, as well as new initiatives.

QUESTIONS:

1. Does our current faculty position the University for the future?

Criterion 5: The University demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.

Does the University fairly and accurately represent itself to others? Does it deal with people in fair and equitable ways?

TASKS:

☐ Review the Faculty Handbook, Departmental Charters, and other University documents (e.g., tenure and promotion, grievance, scientific misconduct, conflict of interest, academic freedom).

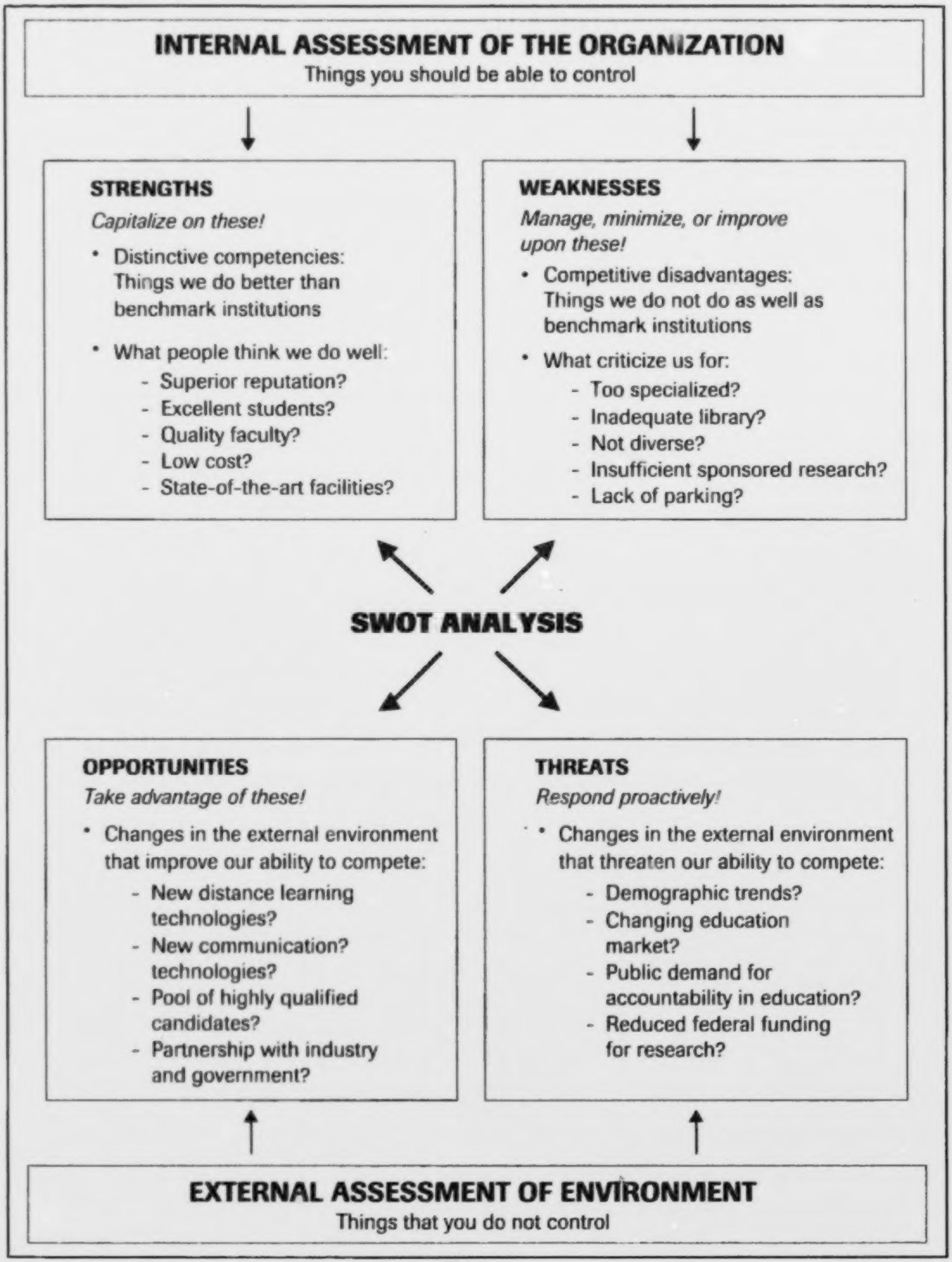
☐ Identify standards regarding integrity, including
  - opportunities for faculty to participate in governance,
  - consistency of treatment of faculty with comparable needs, and
  - freedom of inquiry.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do the University's formal processes adequately provide integrity in faculty hiring, reward, and promotion and tenure?
2. Does the University culture adequately promote integrity, professionalism, freedom of inquiry?

Figure 1. MTU NCA Goal Committee Charge (abbreviated)

Appendix B



INTERNAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION
Things you should be able to control

STRENGTHS

Capitalize on these!

- Distinctive competencies: Things we do better than benchmark institutions
- What people think we do well:
  - Superior reputation?
  - Excellent students?
  - Quality faculty?
  - Low cost?
  - State-of-the-art facilities?

WEAKNESSES

Manage, minimize, or improve upon these!

- Competitive disadvantages: Things we do not do as well as benchmark institutions
- What criticize us for:
  - Too specialized?
  - Inadequate library?
  - Not diverse?
  - Insufficient sponsored research?
  - Lack of parking?

SWOT ANALYSIS

OPPORTUNITIES

Take advantage of these!

- Changes in the external environment that improve our ability to compete:
  - New distance learning technologies?
  - New communication? technologies?
  - Pool of highly qualified candidates?
  - Partnership with industry and government?

THREATS

Respond proactively!

- Changes in the external environment that threaten our ability to compete:
  - Demographic trends?
  - Changing education market?
  - Public demand for accountability in education?
  - Reduced federal funding for research?

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENT
Things that you do not control

Figure 2

The Don'ts, Don'ts, and Do's of a Self-Study

Steven Brown

In the Beginning...

Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) is a public, four-year university on the northwest side of Chicago. When asked to coordinate the self-study, I discussed at length with our Provost (who is now President) what her expectations were. Clearly, the goal was to receive continued accreditation with the next visit scheduled in ten years. No one truly knows what the Coordinator must endure unless that person has walked in his/her shoes. Listening to comments of past Coordinators gives a thumbnail sketch of the scope of responsibilities, but nothing comes close to the full implications of such a task, until one is deeply immersed in the process.

How Big Should the Steering Committee "Ark" Be?

The first step in the process was to decide the overall structure and scope of our Steering Committee. Attending an NCA meeting of Self-Study Coordinators at the 1995 Annual Meeting, I was encouraged by the comments of those presenters who said that being as inclusive as possible when deciding the composition of the committee was important. One theme that rang out loud and clear was that the number of members was as important as the constituents they represented. It was now January 1996, and the team visit was set for the end of March 1997. This tight timeline goes against the NCA suggested two to three-year self-study process, but we knew we could make it work.

Each university has its own required cast of constituents (characters) whom they must include on the Steering Committee. At Northeastern Illinois University, we decided to call this group the "Policy Committee," because in reality, this group helps to provide ideas as to the scope and direction of the self-study.

Since I had worked closely with our Provost when I chaired our faculty academic affairs council, I knew that she had an incredible depth of knowledge concerning every aspect of our university because of her more than twenty years experience as a faculty member in history and as an administrator. Therefore, she and I spent many hours laying out the blueprint we believed would best serve us during this ritual that occurs at least every ten years. It was then my task to help guide our Policy Committee through the entire fourteen-month experience.

A Brief Checklist for Selecting a Steering Committee

A Caveat: Realize at the outset that someone will be offended that she/he was not asked to serve on this committee. (For some reason, this committee is viewed as "the in-place" to be.)

Some Do's

- ✔ Compile an exhaustive list of persons who might serve on the committee, knowing that you will do some major winnowing. At NEIU we made sure that we had representation from the faculty, academic administrators, administrators from other units, and civil service staff.
- ✔ Seek advice from key administrators (the president and vice president for academic affairs, and others suggested by the president/provost) as to who should be on the "A-List" and who could be possible "back-ups" in case someone cannot or will not serve.
- ✔ Once the final selection is made (usually by the president/provost), make sure that a personal letter is sent out by the president welcoming each member to this "most important" committee.

✔ As Self-Study Coordinator, contact all persons appointed, welcoming them to the committee and indicating the importance of their involvement.

The First Meeting of the Policy Committee: Setting the Tone, Pace, and Mood

At the first meeting of the Policy Committee, the university president gave her "charge," which provided the committee members with a framework in which we would design the self-study. Other agenda items included:

- Introduction of members
- The purpose of the self-study
- Summary of the five NCA Criteria for Accreditation
- The self-study timetable
- Examples of self-study formats
- Team Visit Report from 1985: How did NEIU address issues or concerns during the past ten years?
- Conducting a "Special Emphases" self-study (suggested topics)
- Establishment of task force committees
- Setting of future meetings

Months to Visit	Month - Year	Activity	Performed by	Months into Process
15	January-1996	Policy Committee Establish Task Force Committees Create "Operations Committee"	Policy	1
14	February 1996	Monitor Task Force Committees	Self-Study Coordinator and Operations Committee	2
4	December 1996	Final copies of Self-Study distributed to Policy Committee and Univ. Community	Operations Committee and Self-Study Coordinator	12
1	March 1997	Distribution of Self-Study materials to NCA Visitation Team	Self-Study Coordinator	15
0	March 31-April 2	NCA Team Visit	NCA	16

The above sample schedule was quite useful to the process as it gave us a sense of focus and purpose. Of course, there was a small amount of editing of the timeline, but generally, we stayed very close to the schedule. When developing our schedule, I purposely built in some "wiggle room" that gave us a bit of breathing space. Finally, make every effort to work closely with your NCA liaison and the Evaluation Team Chair regarding the overall schedule.

Some Don'ts to Consider: The Timeline and the Role of the Coordinator

- ✔ Don't allow a few naysayers to force you to alter the schedule.
- ✔ Don't deviate more than 10% from the suggested schedule.

How to Manage the Evaluation Team Effectively on Your Campus

The Evaluation Team members received our Self-Study materials (including a letter from the President) six weeks before their visit. As Self-Study Coordinator, I also spoke occasionally with the Team Chair to complete the on-campus schedule of events during the team visit. When the team members arrived on campus, I met with them briefly at their hotel (on Easter Sunday). All team members received individual notebooks that included their "own" schedule of activities (such as meetings with deans, chairs, faculty members, students, and other administrators). A sample of a team member's schedule is below:

Date	Time	Activity	Location	Notes
Monday, March 31	8:30 A.M. 9:00 A.M.	Arrive at NEIU and prepare for campus visit Meeting with President	CC-217 President's Office	Van Departs Hotel at 8:15 A.M. for NEIU
	9:30 A.M.	Team visits with NCA Self-Study Policy Committee	CC-216	
	4:00 P.M.-5:00 P.M.	Afternoon Tea Reception for all Team members	Golden Eagles	
Tuesday, April 1	9:00 A.M.-1:00 p.m.	Continued visits to on-campus and off-campus locations	Varied	Van Departs for NEIU at 8:30 A.M.
	3:00 P.M.-4:00 P.M.	Open meeting with NEIU Civil Service and A&P Staff	CC-216	
	4:00-5:00 P.M.	Meeting with representatives from NEIU Board of Trustees	President's Conference Room	All Team members are invited to this event Van Departs for Hotel at 5:15 P.M.

In addition to each member's receiving an individual schedule, a *"schedule at a glance"* was prepared so each team member would know where other team members were at any time. Also, copies of the team's schedule were distributed at various places around the campus, including the President's Office, offices of the vice presidents, and all of the college deans' offices.

In Summary: When It Is All Said and DONE!

Overall, the entire NCA self-study process is a most invigorating and professionally challenging and rewarding experience. Unless someone has actually walked in the shoes of a Self-Study Coordinator, one cannot truly know what it all means. The stress and problem-solving tasks are never-ending. There is no real "down time" from its outset through the team's visit and follow-up activities. Finally, it is increasingly more difficult to have other major responsibilities (like teaching or other administrative duties) as the team visit approaches. Since each institution has its own set of rules, contractual obligations, and standards, there is no single model that can be applied.

The Self-Study Coordinator's best friend is the NCA staff liaison assigned to that institution. I found our liaison's guidance and assistance to be invaluable. Seldom can a member of the academy have such an incredible experience, but it must be balanced with having your eyes wide open and your expectations for success very high.

Steven Brown is Special Assistant to the President and Professor of Educational Administration at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago.

Advice and Support from a Coordinator Who Has Gone Through the NCA Self-Study Process and Is Still the Same Happy Person She Always Was...Really!

K. C. Roberts-Berke

The History and Background of Cleary College

Cleary College was founded in 1883 by P. R. Cleary and was a small family business for its first fifty years. In 1933 it became a not-for-profit college. With its entrepreneurial roots and its business operations' perspective, the College has remained largely tuition-dependent and is not a wealthy, well-endowed institution. Thus, value exchange and customer/market responsiveness have always been of critical importance.

The College has enjoyed a rich tradition of innovation in response to the changing needs of the business and educational community. In its earliest years, the College offered a correspondence program in addition to its on-campus offerings to respond to the needs of the aspiring business persons who were farm-bound. It offered commercial courses to secondary schools that could not afford to offer sophisticated business expertise. The College was the first area institution to offer a summer session, and it enjoyed the first joint program (with Michigan State Normal College) approved by the State Board of Education; Cleary taught business core courses to students majoring in business education at the "Normal."

Female students have always made up a significant percentage of the College student body. Additional programs were offered in the war years to facilitate women's entrance to the business community, and enrollment patterns have changed to reflect the expanding role of women in business. Evening course work grew during post-war periods as increasing numbers of students enrolled while employed; and for a brief period, the College operated in Ohio as well as in Michigan and offered graduate studies.

In 1979, Cleary College opened a second campus with parallel direct instructional and student services in response to community and business needs, and it more recently began a successful weekend program to respond to the needs of the working adult.

Cleary College has historically believed that guided application of theory offered the best opportunity for student learning, that the teaching-learning of theory offered the best opportunity for student learning, and that the teaching-learning relationship was significantly enhanced when both instructor and student brought practical-based experience to the classroom. Practical career-related education has always been a primary focus.

The College currently enrolls approximately 650 students. Our primary campuses are located in Ypsilanti and in Howell, Michigan. Extension sites for the Direct Degree programs include Auburn Hills, Dearborn Heights, Farmington Hills, Southfield, Garden City, and Waterford, Michigan. The College maintains its historical focus on business with programs in management, marketing, accounting, and business information systems.

Cleary College has been affiliated with the North Central Association for approximately a decade. Its history, excellence, and value to the business and broader community, however, are more than one hundred years old.

Today, Cleary continues to offer a practical, career-oriented education to its students, most of whom are adults and all of whom reside off campus since there are no residential facilities. Cleary students are serious, focused, and assertive. The College's belief in the principles of quality management leads us to encourage and actively seek feedback from not only our students, but also from faculty, staff, alumni, and colleagues. The feedback is essential to our continuous improvement processes.

Cleary College offers its students a supportive educational environment and an opportunity to advance themselves in specific career goals. In 1998, the mission of Cleary College remains true to P.R. Cleary's vision of a practical education for business careers.

The Organization of the Report

The organization of the Cleary College Self-Study Report includes an Introduction, which provides the context for the evaluation and addresses the concerns expressed by previous Commission teams. Chapters One through Five focus on an evaluation of Cleary College using each of the established NCA Criteria. The institution has attempted to stress analysis and evaluation in its self-study process as well as the interpretation of its findings. Each chapter includes an evaluation of the College's strengths and concerns regarding each criterion, and a plan of action. The Summary & Conclusion contains specific plans for action or additional study and Cleary College's request for continued accreditation. The General Institutional Requirements are located in Appendix A; the Basic Institutional Data Forms are addressed in a separately bound supplemental book (see Resource Room). The writers have attempted to follow the guidelines offered in the NCA *Handbook of Accreditation* wherever possible.

The Self-Study Process

The Cleary College self-study process was designed to involve as many members of the College community as possible. It was directed by a Steering Committee of 15 active members, several consultants, and 18 self-study teams comprised of faculty, staff, and student members involved in active study, review, and improvement plans of College programs. In addition, various self-study teams surveyed several hundred alumni, students, faculty, staff, and employers, and their responses were included in the study. The entire College community was involved in this accreditation self-study process.

Vince Linder, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and K.C. Roberts-Berke, Center for Teaching Excellence Chair, were appointed by President Sullivan to serve as the Self-Study Coordinators to coordinate the preparation of the report. Professor Roberts-Berke was given release time from her regular teaching assignments to work with the study committees. The Steering Committee was appointed by the President and was comprised of the members of the planning council, the executive planning group of the College, and the Cleary College Senate–an advisory group to the President. The resulting group contained representation from executive, professional, and technical/support staffs, as well as faculty and students throughout the College.

Albert Huegli served as the North Central Process Consultant to offer advice on the process of organizing and developing the NCA self-study. Professor Stephen R. Ball, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment of Cleary College, acted as a statistical consultant, advising study committees on data collection and analysis to assure consistency and validity across these groups.

The President and the Self-Study Coordinators attended the NCA Annual Meeting in Chicago on March 23-26, 1996. The President attended the pre-conference workshop session for Consultant-Evaluators. The Self-Study Coordinators participated in the Pre-Conference Workshop for Self-Study Coordinators, including sessions on methods to develop a quality Steering Committee, the Basic Institutional Data Forms, Outcomes Assessment, academic integrity, and various mentoring sessions conducted by colleges that had recently been through an NCA accreditation visit. They also spent time in the Self-Study Resource Room, which contained Self-Study Reports from a wide range of colleges across the United States that offered their expertise on how they produced their self-studies. The knowledge and guidance gained from this NCA conference proved to be invaluable.

The first meeting of the Steering Committee took place on March 8, 1996. The agenda included the history and background of Cleary College's involvement with NCA and a complete description of the Steering Committee's purpose and role as outlined by the NCA *Handbook*. A tentative Table of Contents was presented, and assignments and timelines were explained. A design for the self-study process and the document was developed. The Steering Committee has met since then on a monthly basis.

After the study committees were finalized at the April Steering Committee meeting, Professor Ball and Professor Roberts-Berke conducted meetings with each study group to train members on study methods and to set expectations for the work to be done. A Study Committee Handbook was developed and used to give guidance for the groups. The bulk of the study committee work was done between May and August of 1996. The Steering Committee assessed progress based on the timeline and reviewed materials as they became available. This material and the guidelines will be covered in the mentor group session during the 1998 NCA Annual Meeting.

Concurrent with the work cycle for the study committees, Professor Roberts-Berke drafted the introductory and background sections for the Report and assembled the appendix information. The appropriate divisions completed the Basic Institutional Data Forms. During the Summer and Fall of 1996, the remainder of the study draft was assembled, edited, revised, and finalized. When completed, the draft was offered to the College community (all staff and faculty) to proofread on a volunteer basis. The goal was to have as many reactions from as many people within the College as possible.

During the development period for the study, various constituencies of the College were kept informed about progress. In addition to normal communication expected through the Steering Committee representatives to their respective groups, the College's internal newsletter was used to give periodic updates. The Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees and the entire Board received updates at each of their meetings. Libraries at each campus also have an NCA Resource File on reserve for all faculty, staff, and students to view at their convenience.

The NCA staff liaison guided the College through the self-study process and was involved at several points. He reviewed our Self-Study Plan, visited the College to meet with the Steering Committee on May 3, 1996, and gave much-needed insight and assistance in the self-study process.

Finally, a Writing Committee was appointed from the Steering Committee. Each member had the responsibility of preparing a draft response that addressed the self-study objectives for a specific NCA Criterion and the General Institutional Requirements associated with that Criterion. Two months were scheduled for writing the chapter, presenting it to the NCA Steering Committee, making the final revisions, and printing. The NCA Self-Study Report was completed and ready to mail during March 1997.

The Evaluation Team visited Cleary College on May 19-21, 1997; the College was granted continued accreditation with the next comprehensive evaluation scheduled in ten years.

K. C. Roberts-Berke is Chair of the Center for Teaching at Cleary College in Howell, Mich.

NCA:
It Can Be Accomplished– and Creatively, Too!

Susan Hildebrand
Jack Gittinger

Graceland College History

The pioneering spirit that characterized the American frontier in the latter half of the nineteenth century resulted in the founding of more than 300 American colleges between the Civil War and World War I. Established in 1895, Graceland was one of those colleges. Although officially sponsored by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS), the college was consciously and publicly nonsectarian from its inception. The college founders were committed to social and economic progress, open inquiry, the unqualified pursuit of truth, and the development of the character of students.

Although its beginnings were humble, the commitment of the young college to its pursuit of excellence was unwavering. Graceland began as a four-year college, but leaders realized that its financial resources would not permit it to attain the high standard it sought as a baccalaureate-degree granting institution. In 1914, Graceland became a two-year educational program designed to prepare students to move to a larger university for upper division work. In 1920 Graceland received its first NCA accreditation. In the late 1950's the college began the transition to a four-year institution. In 1960 the North Central Association approved the College's move to the bachelor's level, limited to the degree in Religion.

Today, Graceland College offers a quality educational program at multiple locations using various course delivery methods to provide opportunities for many students. Students may take Graceland College courses at the following locations.

- The **home campus,** located in Lamoni, Iowa, provides education for full-time residential and part-time students, who seek the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Arts (Honors), Bachelor of Science, or Bachelor of Science (Honors) degrees in 40 different majors. Courses are available for non-degree seeking students interested in courses for personal enrichment.

- The **Graceland Independence Campus** (GIC) located in Independence, Missouri, provides on campus education for full-time students for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree. The GIC also provides the Outreach program, which allows Registered Nurses the flexibility to earn either the B.S.N. or B.A. degree through directed independent study in their home area and residency courses at the GIC. A B.A. degree with a major in Addiction Studies and a Master of Science in Nursing Degree are also offered through the Outreach Program.

- Students may earn the Bachelor of Arts degree through **Partnership Programs** offered at the American Institute of Business in Des Moines, Iowa, Indian Hills Community College in Centerville, Iowa, North Central Missouri College in Trenton, Missouri, and Southwestern Community College in Creston, Iowa.

As with many other institutions, the college rode the wave of the baby boomers and experienced steady growth in enrollment and expansion of academic programs through the decades of the 1960s and 1970s. Enrollments peaked at over 1300 in the mid 1970s and then began the decline that reached a low point of 810 students in 1987.

The North Central Association decennial accreditation visit of 1986 occurred against this background of declining enrollment, faculty and staff reductions, deferred building maintenance, and general financial restrictions. The self-study for that visit and the suggestions, concerns, and strengths identified by the NCA Evaluation Team contributed to the planning and implementation efforts already under way that resulted in a renaissance at Graceland in the ensuing 10 years. The college was committed to demonstrating those efforts in its 1996 self-study, and to that end organized a process that involved full participation of the college community in identifying its current strengths and future challenges.

Graceland College 1996

Graceland College today is a healthy institution. The Lamoni campus is substantially full. The Independence facility has outgrown its capacity and is in the process of building a new facility. On the Lamoni and Independence campuses, a strong sense of community exists that nurtures individual learning and socialization. Graceland's reputation for responding to current educational opportunities with high-quality programs is positive and widespread. Looking beyond traditional programs, the college has matched its historic strengths with current needs.

As a marker of the achievement of 100 distinguished years of existence, a year-long commemoration of Graceland's centennial in 1995-1996 celebrated an institution that is growing and responding to current educational change, but that remains faithful to its original nonsectarian commitment to economic and social progress, open inquiry, the unqualified pursuit of truth, and the development of the character of its students. Vigorous, expanding, financially strong, Graceland began its second hundred years.

1996 Self-Study

Preparation for continued accreditation by NCA began 18 months prior to the team visit with the establishment of a Self-Study Steering Committee. At its initial meeting, the members explored options by which the college might engage all members of the community in the process of self-study and, thereby, support the belief of the college that broad participation in deliberation about institutional affairs is not only the best basis for decision-making but is also a developmental opportunity for those who participate. This practice creates a strong sense of community as well. The college has been intentional in involving faculty, students, and staff in deliberation and decision-making. This committee determined that a Delphi process would be a way to extend the invitation to the entire Graceland community to participate in analysis and evaluation of the college. As it evolved, this process involved employees, students leaders, trustees, and alumni, who identified Graceland strengths and challenges. The committee's energy and enthusiasm for the process led to the theme of "Nurture the Goose" with a goose egg as the logo for our work.

As part of the NCA self-study, key constituents of the college were surveyed to assess the strengths and challenges of the college. Constituent groups included the employees (staff, professional, administration, and faculty), students (Lamoni campus, Graceland Independence Campus, outreach, and partnership sites), the alumni council, and the Graceland Independence Campus advisory council. For most groups a Delphi process was used. Participants were asked to list the three greatest challenges facing Graceland and the three greatest strengths of Graceland. These responses were then tallied and the 21 most frequent responses were listed on a survey form for institutional strengths and one for institutional challenges. Participants were then asked to rate each of the 21 institutional strength items on a seven point scale from high agreement (i.e., definitely an institutional strength) to lower agreement (i.e., in my opinion not as clearly an institutional strength). The same process was used for institutional challenges. Participants were instructed to select three items for each of the seven levels. The items were then ranked according to their total score for levels 1 and 2. The top scoring items were listed in the self-study. For most constituent groups seven to ten items received the highest scores with a significant break between these and the remainder of the 21 items.

An additional component of the self-study process involved each member of the Steering Committee developing a list of individuals, who by the nature of their position and responsibility at the college, might provide relevant data to support accomplishment of the criterion to which the committee member was assigned. As these lists were generated by committee members, questions for the individuals were also developed. It became clear that if each committee member were to interview the identified individuals, a great deal of time would be expended by everyone. To avoid that problem, the chairperson of the committee hired an individual with a background in public relations and communication to conduct the interviews and secure data for committee members. These data would be used as committee members wrote their particular sections of the Self-Study Report.

Further refinement of the self-study process occurred through participation by individual members of the staff and faculty. Each person was given the opportunity to respond to the question, "How does what I do at the College help accomplish Graceland's mission?" In addition, all campus divisions and departments were guided in the accomplishment of "mini self-studies" organized around the five NCA criteria. The Steering Committee members developed questions, related to their assigned criterion, that served as the framework for the mini self-studies undertaken by departments and divisions. Leaders of these department and divisions were oriented to the purposes and process of the mini self-study and were given a schedule and format for data collection. Three purposes were identified for the mini self-study process: (1) to provide a self-analysis of the department or division by which vision, opportunities, and problems could be pinpointed; (2) to serve as a replication of the college self-study and provide data to be used in the assessment of the college; and (3) to inform each employee about the NCA self-study process and prepare her/him for the Evaluation Team. To ensure participation by all members of the department or division, questions generated by Steering Committee members were identified as those to be addressed by department or division heads, those to be addressed by survey of the members of the group, and those to be addressed through group process. Mini self-study data provided evidence throughout the Self-Study Report.

When these pieces were brought together, the committee discussed the format for presentation of the data. Several committee members who had been involved in self-study and site visiting supported attempting a unique approach to the written report. The committee decided to take a risk by bypassing the traditional format and chose instead to organize data around the five purposes of Graceland found in the Mission Statement and to organize chapters related to: student body, program, environment, faculty, and values. Each chapter presented a discussion of how Graceland had organized its resources to accomplish that purpose, a description of how Graceland was currently accomplishing that purpose, a projection of the institutional strengths that would allow Graceland to continue to accomplish that purpose, and a demonstration of the integrity with which that purpose was carried out. These sections were identified by sidebar notations. An index to the discussion of each criterion was prepared. Supporting documents cited in the self-study were numbered for quick reference and were arranged in numerical order by chapter in the NCA team meeting room on campus.

The committee believed that this organization for the self-study not only presented a coherent portrait of the institution but also would be an important source of information for Graceland personnel and would serve as a basis for ongoing development. Key college leaders and members of the Board of Trustees who read the drafts during preparation of the report plan to make extensive use of the self-study. Admission counselors and newly hired employees will be urged to read the edited version from which confidential information has been removed.

The division and department mini self-study process, coupled with the Delphi survey, has resulted in a solid basis for analysis of the current mission of Graceland. Special attention is being focused on the newly expanded programs of the college, which include the partnership program, SkillPath, alternative delivery systems, and the Master of Science in Nursing. This foundational thinking is now being used as a basis for development of the mission and vision for the future. The self-study committee concluded that the purposes contained in the Mission Statement continue to provide an appropriate foundation for operationalizing the activities at Graceland College. The self-study provided evidence of the strengths of Graceland College that justified its continuation as an accredited college.

Graceland has a remarkable history of aggressive response to unanticipated opportunities. Its willingness to take risks is disciplined by careful planning as opportunities unfold. The institution's strategic thinking and response to the enrollment crisis of the 1980s demonstrate its resiliency and its capacity to confront and solve its problems. These characteristics are present in every segment of the college. Through its strategic planning, it is constantly measuring the changing needs of the culture of which it is a part.

Reference

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Susan Hildebrand is Professor of Nursing at Graceland College in Independence, Mo.

Jack Gittinger is Associate Professor of Education at Graceland College.

Practical Suggestions for Your Self-Study Process and Team Visit

Larry J. Bossman

I would like to begin by addressing those of you in the early phase of self-study with some suggestions, and then give suggestions to those of you in the mid-way phase and the finishing phase. These are simply suggestions based upon my own experiences as a two-time Self-Study Coordinator as well as my work with North Central as a Consultant-Evaluator over the past eleven years. Please use these suggestions as you find them appropriate to your institutional situation.

For Coordinators Who Are Just Beginning the Self-Study Process

☐ **Cushion time**

We've all heard of a Self-Study Plan, right? And how many of you have submitted one already? How many are writing one? For those of you who have already completed the Plan, I suggest that you go back to it, and look for two particular dates: the date designated for the completion of the *printing* of your Self-Study Report, and the date indicated to ship the Self-Study Report to the Evaluation Team members. Look at those two dates: I would suggest that they should be separated by about a month-and-a-half's time. And if that means going back and adjusting earlier points in the Plan, then go ahead and do that. The reason for having a month-and-a-half "cushion time" is to allow you to contend with unforeseen obstacles, so to speak. Despite the fact that you have a plan that is based upon that presented in the most current issue of the NCA *Handbook of Accreditation*, even the best-made plans can go awry. That month-and-a-half would be good for you to have in case certain factors come together to create havoc.

☐ **The editing function**

Second, when you reexamine your Self-Study Plan, ask yourself one question: Is there enough room in this plan for the editing function? I think that one of the most underplayed factors in the self-study process is the editing function. And, as I'll point out later, there's editing and there's editing. Some individuals can edit well *within* a chapter, and others who edit well across chapters. It is crucial that the latter form of editing...across chapters...be undertaken for the purpose of eliminating redundancies.

☐ **Committee structure**

While the Commission recommends a wide array of participation throughout your institution in the self-study process—and that is possible—be careful of the way in which you try to accomplish that. One approach that you don't want to embrace is that of having a cast of thousands serve on your self-study committee. When that happens, the committee can become unruly, and many committee members begin to take their responsibilities too lightly. It simply becomes too difficult to manage. What I would recommend doing is to have as small a self-study committee as possible, and that number is generally governed by the outline or format you create for your Self-Study Report. But if you can limit your committee to ten or twelve people, then you can develop cohesiveness among them, motivate them, and coordinate their efforts well.

Now, however, how can you promote a widespread participation if your self-study committee is a mere dozen or so? The way it can be done is to assign subcommittees to your own committee members. These subcommittees can range in size from a few to many. For example, I would strongly recommend that on your own committee you have a person knowledgeable enough of your Financial Staff's operations who can "take charge" of that section of your Self-Study Report dealing with Financial Resources. That person, in turn, may want no subcommittee...he or she can research and write that section of the report as an individual. Or she or he may want only two or three members, say one from inside and two from outside the Financial Staff.

By contrast, another individual from your committee responsible for the section on Faculty Resources may opt for a relatively large subcommittee made up of one or two representatives from each of your departments, areas (if your institution is a college), or from each of your colleges or schools (if your institution is a university). In short, try to develop a nice flat pyramidal structure of committees. And, by the way, try your best to coordinate all efforts of your own committee members in the research and data-collecting phase of the self-study process. For example, don't have seven of your committee members making different appointments to interview your president!

☐ **Microscopic vs. macroscopic approaches**

Finally, try to get your report's outline or format out to your committee as soon as possible. That outline may take a goodly amount of thought on your behalf. But remember this: if you look at what has happened to the self-study criteria over the past 10–15 years, you'll note that the Criteria have, in part, been redefined or extended; Criterion Five was added in 1992. In the past, many self-studies placed the greatest focus on Criterion Two. Many Self-Study Reports back then took on what I call a "microscopic approach"; that is, they examined the institution department-by-department, area-by-area. The Reports were microscopically detailed in their orientation and content.

Since the mid-1980s, the self-study process has taken on a more "macroscopic approach." That is, focus has shifted to the institution as a whole. Today, we tend to see more institutions taking a macroscopic approach...which, personally, I believe is most desirable. But there other institutions that try to meld both approaches: on the one hand, they are more or less forced to take something of a macroscopic analysis because of the very nature of the Criteria; yet, on the other hand, they continue to rely heavily on a microscopic approach, based on the belief that every basic unit of the institution should somehow be represented in the report.

So, try to get your outline or format macroscopically oriented. It's a much cleaner approach. And remember, your institution is being evaluated and accredited as one, single entity...which is, technically speaking, a macroscopic process.

For Those Coordinators Who Are Mid-Way Through the Self-Study Process

At this point, you should be checking the work progress of your committee members and their sub-committees. (I'm assuming, here, that your committee members have been largely absorbed in research and data collection.)

☐ **Length of report and editing**

As you work with your committee members, attempt to ascertain the likely length of your written report. At the very first NCA Annual Meeting I attended here years ago, I participated in a session like this one, conducted by a Commission staff liaison. I asked that staff member what the maximum length of a typical Self-Study Report should be; he said that any institution, regardless of size, can do a very adequate job with a double spaced document of 200 pages or less. Now his answer has always stuck in the back of my mind; and to tell you the truth, when I pick up a Self-Study Report in preparation for a team visit and it is 1-1/2 spaced and 300 pages long, I become quite impatient! The reason for that impatience is that, either good editing hadn't been done, or the report was simply too detailed...far too microscopic. In the former case, the editing function was not sufficient because the report was not edited *across chapters*, and redundancy occurred.

On the other hand, the report can be simply too detailed: do I as an Evaluation Team member really want to know who serves as secretary of the AVP's Council of Deans? Often times, committee members can get so worked up in trying to cover a particular topic, that they simply over do it. If you can obtain a copy of another institution's Self-Study Report that has a general style you like in terms of macroscopic analysis, level of detail, and readability, I'd suggest that you purchase some copies and hand them over to members of your committee as an example that they can follow. Believe me, they will appreciate your effort.

So, try to hit for the "two-space, 200 max!" in terms of your report's volume. Now, by the way, those 200-max pages do not include the Basic Institutional Data Forms. The BIDs can be put into your Appendix. Also, Coordinators, if you are serving as editors...and I think you should, at least as a first-phase editor...try to make sure that the Report does what it is supposed to do: address the five Criteria!

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☐ **Impact of special activities and events**

Sometimes, an institution, under the leadership of its president, gets into some major activity, such as strategic planning. Everybody is doing strategic planning! What we can end up with is a Self-Study Report replete with the topic of strategic planning. And the strategic planning process, as an issue, overshadows the five criteria, which, of course, are what the report is supposed to be based on. Sometimes those special interests or current events take on too prominent a place in the report. So, edit out excessive sections on special interests or special events.

☐ **Handling the GIRs**

One question that sometimes arises is: What on earth do we do with the GIRs in the report? The rule of thumb that I like to give is: it depends upon the history of your institution with the Commission. For example, if your institution has a long established accreditation history, then the role of the GIRs becomes less significant . . . although you still have to account for them. In other words, you needn't give them a prominent place in your report. You can provide the answers to the GIRs right up front in your Appendix, followed by the BIDs. On the other hand, if your institution is in candidacy, or if this is your institution's first or second comprehensive, then, perhaps, you'd want to give them a more prominent place in your report. In that case, you might place them in the first chapter of the report itself.

☐ **Use of an introductory chapter**

The Commission staff likes to have a description of your self-study process right up front in the report. Here, I'd suggest creating a preface or introductory chapter, and, in that chapter, cover two topics. If there are, from a previous comprehensive or focused visit, any "concerns" identified by the prior Evaluation Team, those concerns should be addressed right up front in the introductory chapter. In other words, here's what the last team was concerned about, and here's what the institution has done to resolve the concerns. Don't allow former concerns that haven't been addressed to go unaddressed in your Self-Study Report. Following this section, put in a description of your self-study process: how you went about the process, how your committee system was structured, who were on the committees, and so forth. Staff likes that description up front.

Finally, have your editor(s) note that staff also likes the report to be written in active, rather than passive, voice (e.g., "The committee collected its data." rather than "Data were collected by the committee.")

For Those Coordinators Who Are Finishing the Self-Study Process

☐ **Contacting your Team Chair**

About five or six months before the Evaluation Team is scheduled to arrive, contact your Team Chair. I suggest this for two reasons. First, technically, you as Coordinator are the Team Chair's formal contact person with your institution. You should introduce yourself to take care of any questions or needs that the chair may have. But there's another reason why you should contact your Team Chair: to create diplomatic ties; and I use that expression carefully. Technically speaking, it is the Team Chair who has the formal authority as to what goes on during the actual visit. On the other hand, you want diplomatic ties established because, as Coordinator, you, too, want to coordinate and, to some extent, "control" the visit process. That might sound like heresy to some of you, but it's something you should bear in mind. For example, prior to the mid 1980's, a typical Evaluation Team would descend on an institution's campus at 8 A.M. on Monday. They would go to the president's office for an introductory welcome. And then it was mayhem! Team members ran around getting Coordinators, secretaries, and others to arrange schedules, appointments, meetings, and even restaurant reservations. It usually took most of the morning to get these arrangements set in place.

☐ **Scheduling special events**

In the mid-1980s, when I was Self-Study Coordinator for the first time, I did make contact with our Team Chair, and over a period of about five months, I would call her and suggest "what about this?" or "would you be amenable to setting up a luncheon for the officers of our faculty union and representatives of your team?" And she agreed in each case. She sometimes questioned, but was very cordial to my suggestions. We ended up with twelve special events scheduled for the visit.

Historically, there have been three events scheduled ahead of time for team visits: president's welcome (first thing on Monday), luncheon with Board of Trustee representatives (typically arranged for Tuesday at noon), and the exit session (usually at 11:00 A.M. or so on Wednesday). What I am suggesting, as in the case of the luncheon we set for members of the team and faculty-union representatives, is take care of special events, and have them scheduled ahead of time. For example, two special events would be a "faculty open forum" and a "student open forum." Work with the Team Chair, diplomatically, and set things up ahead of time so you can get notices out to students (via the student newspapers) and the faculty (via e-mail or faculty meetings...that you should attend a few weeks ahead of the visit date). But other special events are nice, depending upon specific features of your institution.

At any rate, what has happened over time is that we have gone to the minimal pre-planning for the visit, at one end of the spectrum, to overplanning, at the other end of the spectrum. I was on a team recently where Monday morning, as we sat down at the president's table, each team member received a two-page schedule or timetable accounting for every hour of the day between 8 am and 5:30 pm. To me, that's overdoing it! [And, by the way, the idea for the two-page schedule wasn't the doing of the Coordinator!]

So try, diplomatically, to work with the Team Chair to schedule special events. Most Team Chairs are amenable to working with you in that way. A few go overboard on directives, and, in that case, there's not too much you can do about it.

☐ **Team accommodations**

Another thing you can do in dealing with your Team Chair is to set up accommodations for the actual team visit. To take care of these various accommodations–motel/hotel, conference room, transportation, team room, restaurants–I would suggest that you pull together a task force (separate from your self-study committee). You might want to have your Director of Maintenance, Computer Center representative, and someone from PR on this task force. Work with the group to plan out the accommodation needs of the team. For example, if your institution is located in a small town, the person on your task force assigned to motel/hotel reservations may not have much to choose from. On the other hand, if your institution is in a large city setting, there may be an array of wonderful choices for hotel arrangements. Your Team Chair may request a conference room in the motel or hotel where the team stays. Your task force may or may not be able to get one, depending on the location of your institution.

Your task force must also set up an on-campus Team Room for the exclusive use of team members. The Team Room should contain all relevant documents that are referred to in your Self-Study Report (and for the GIRs). Word processors and printers should also be set up in this room, with sufficient table space to accommodate the full team. Juices, rolls, fruit, and coffee are nice to have in the Team Room in the mornings; coffee, pop, cookies in the afternoon. In other words, treat your team members as special guests.

Another accommodation has to do with transportation. Here, again, working with your Team Chair, determine what he or she wants, e.g., obtaining rental cars, so the team is self reliant; providing institutional bus service; or lending the team a large van. If your institution has multiple campuses, I would suggest having administrators and faculty poised to drive individual team members to the other campuses. Your task force can handle these "other campus" visits as special events that can be scheduled ahead.

Keep in mind that one of the "perks" for team members is good evening dining! I would suggest that one of your task-force members put together the menus of the better restaurants near the hotel/motel where the team will stay. Another thing–speaking of food–have a member of your task force make arrangements with your cafeteria(s) to accommodate the team members for lunches and/or breakfasts...regardless of where they are on your campus or campuses. A simple way of doing this is to create some coupons for the team members, and inform your cafeteria cashiers to honor those coupons for breakfast or lunch.

☐ **Arranging for the Exit Session**

Now, for the final event: the exit session! You should work with your Team Chair to ascertain the time of the exit session on Wednesday morning. Eleven A.M. is a fairly standard time. Coordinate with your president to determine whom he/she wants to attend, in addition to the team members. Make sure, too, that your president is available one-half to one hour prior to the exit session, for it is customary for the Team Chair to meet privately with the president and inform him/her of what will be said in the exit session.

During the exit session, the Team Chair will review the "strengths and concerns" the team has come up with concerning your institution, as well as the team's recommendation (to the Commission) as to the institution's continued accreditation status. At the completion of the exit session, the team members are expected to exit immediately. So, if your institution is responsible for providing transportation for the team, make sure that transportation is available and ready to take off. Team members are not permitted to stay beyond the exit session.

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The Self-Study Resource Room at the Annual Meeting

I should like to point out that there is a Resource Room at the Annual Meeting where sample Self-Study Reports are on display. I'd suggest that those of you in the early phase or mid-way phase of your self-study process spend some time in that display room. And, by the way, you can order copies of any of the reports for minimal fees. As I have found, members of my self-study committees liked to have "something in hand" for their roles as self-study committee members, as sub-committee chairs, as writers, and as editors.

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Chapter 12

Self-Study and Evaluation: Practical Advice

THE Collaborative Imperative

103rd Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
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The Utilization of the Internet and Emerging Technologies in the Collection, Analysis, and Dissemination of Institutional Data in Support of Institutional Self-Study

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The Emergence of Technology in the Self-Study Process

The technological processes and procedures underlying the self-study endeavor have undergone nothing short of a revolution. A few years ago only the most forward thinking academicians conjectured such possibilities as virtual conferencing, data warehousing, instantaneous self-study draft revisions, and accessing massive national data and survey sets. In 1998, e-mail, video and audio teleconferencing, increased use of and reliance upon the Internet, and dramatic technological advancements in desktop computer applications, including desktop publishing and web tools, are becoming commonplace in the process of undertaking a self-study for initial candidacy or reaffirmation of accreditation.

At the 102nd Annual Meeting of the North Central Association in 1997, a number of conference presentations and papers addressed the importance of collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data and information in support of the self-study process. In his paper on data collection for self-study, William Hooper from Southwest Baptist University defined the purpose of such activity as the provision of "information for the institution to use to evaluate how well it is achieving its mission now and how well it can achieve its mission in the future." In their paper on the use of information technology in strategic planning, Karen Schmid and Jeanne Hites of St. Cloud State University highlighted the efficiency and effectiveness of utilizing various data collection and dissemination methods to supplement institutional strategic planning processes. Another paper addressing technological innovation in self-study was presented by representatives from the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus who outlined their experiences in utilizing the World Wide Web for collecting data, expediting the self-study process, and publishing the end product.

In our 1997 Annual Meeting paper, we argued that an institution's ability to measure reliably the congruence between the NCA Criteria for Accreditation and General Institutional Requirements (GIR) and the effectiveness and efficiency of its institutional operations is predicated on access to valid, reliable, and timely institutional data. Furthermore, we outlined the importance of appointing a self-study data committee, utilizing existing sources or institutional data including student learning outcomes assessment data, the development of in-house self-study surveys, and timely dissemination of data and information to the various self-study subcommittees.

The Depth and Breadth of Required Data

The collection, analysis, and dissemination of institutional internal and comparative data is truly a colluded endeavor, a collaborative imperative if you will, encompassing the entire framework of the academic enterprise from academic affairs to facilities maintenance. Data are needed on student enrollment, credit hour production, faculty productivity, student retention and graduation rates, degree production, professional and support staffing position histories, room usage and facilities planning data, library and media services resources and utilization trends, as well as a myriad of budgetary and financial information. The sheer magnitude of identifying, collecting, and assembling data into a form useful for self-study can be physically (and emotionally) overwhelming. Longitudinal data, typically over eight to 10 years, are necessary for an institution to assess thoroughly its strategic and operational effectiveness. In addition, longitudinal comparative data are useful also in addressing the institution's competitive position within its local, state, regional, and national context.

Existing Sources of Institutional Data

Much of the data required in the self-study process may already exist in some form at your institution. In addition to the required annual NCA data forms, many institutions prepare routine institutional research reports addressing such areas as student headcount enrollment, credit hour production, faculty teaching load, faculty and staff employment trends, and financial expenditure trends. Institutional *FactBooks* often convey this information in formats that assist the institution in decision making and provide good supplemental resources for self-studies. A recent trend has seen institutional research, admissions, and registrar offices compiling institutionally specific common data sets (CDS) for survey and questionnaire response purposes. These data sets, whether described as factbooks or by some other title, contain a wealth of data on many and varied aspects of institutional operations.

Ad hoc and cyclical reports are yet another source of useful information. Many institutions routinely review academic programs and conduct surveys of student opinion and satisfaction, advising, and alumni outcomes, among many others. Professional and technical degree programs are required to undergo specialized accreditation reviews on fixed time schedules, and these often provide models for other programs within the institution. Institutional studies on student loan indebtedness, departmental financial analyses, faculty and staff wage and salary differentials, and other related undertakings are additional useful sources of supplemental data.

For statewide institutional comparative data, many state higher education systems such as Georgia, North Carolina, Ohio, and West Virginia prepare and publish "state of higher education" data compendia examining such variables as student enrollment patterns, state appropriation per FTE, ratios of full to part-time faculty, semester or credit hour production, retention and degree completion rates, and many other useful comparative measures. These resources are also very useful in longitudinal analysis of institutional trends.

Institutions that participate in national data collection and dissemination initiatives also have virtually unlimited access to institutional peer data. For example, retention projects such as the AASCU-Sallie Mae Retention Project, the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE), and the NCAA Persistence and Graduation Rate Survey collect and disseminate retention and graduation rate data on a variety of student cohorts.

Institutional data collection for a self-study should support but not supersede existing information. Timely collection and dissemination of data are of major importance and the Self-Study Institutional Data Committee must provide leadership in this regard.

Gathering Self-Study Data from the Internet

Among the new technologies available, Internet based data are easily accessible, reliable, and provide ready reference for comparative analyses. Institutional and organization web sites have been developed that provide a wealth of information and data useful for self-study. New web sites continue to emerge and present new perspectives on the use and application of data.

The following list of Internet-based statistical references is not intended to be exhaustive; however, it does represent many of the fine resources available to institutions undertaking self-study. While web sites identified below are reputable and dependable, it is worth noting that great care should be taken when using data and information warehoused on the Internet, particular on issues of the currency, validity, and reliability of the data.

Most of these web sites either have or will make their data available at little or no cost to institutions of higher education. Some sites, such as the John Minter and Associates site, are for-profit, proprietary sources that charge fees for access to data. Many of these agencies also make their data available on CD-ROM.

One of the shortcomings of many of these datasets, particularly those of national comparative data, is that the material is often somewhat dated. For example, the most recent faculty data made available through the US Department of

Education's National Center for Educational Statistics *National Study of Postsecondary Education* (NSOPF) are for the 1992-93 academic year. Perhaps the most useful NCES data, the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) survey dataset, are posted two academic years behind.

There are a number of very useful Internet web sites to support data collection and analysis for institutional self-study. These serve as links to data on peer institutional comparisons, performance indicators and measures, accrediting agencies, facilities reports, state, federal, and national data bases, and other useful data repositories. The following are just a few of the many Internet based resources available.

Peer Comparison and Benchmark Data

Committee on Institutional Cooperation (Big 10 + Chicago)	http://cedar.cic.net/cic/
Critical Comparisons of American Colleges and Universities	http://www.memex-press.com/cc
Edsearch: Education Statistics on Disk–1996 Edition	http://nces.ed.gov/pubs97/97076.html
IPEDS Interactive Data base at Arizona State University	http://129.219.88.111/ipeds.html
John Minter Associates–A New Approach to Developing Cohorts	http://www.edmin.com/jma/cohort
John Minter Associates–Benchmarks for Higher Education	http://www.edmin.com/jma
Measuring Institutional Performance series (University of Florida)	http://nervm.nerdc.ufl.edu/~ufdata/#MUPS
Money Guide 1998	http://www.pathfinder.com/money/colleges98
National Center for Educational Statistics	http://www.ed.gov/NCES
NRC Doctorate Rankings	http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/researchdoc
NSF Institutional Profiles	http://www.qrc.com/nsf/srs/profiles/start.com
NSF Public Use Statistical Data Files, 1994	http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/gss/94pubuse.htm
The NACUBO Benchmarking Project	http://138.87.10/web/nacubo/ch3a.html
US News and World Report-1998 College Rankings	http://www4.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/corank.htm

Performance Indicators and Standards

GMU Performance Indicators Project	http://apollo.gmu.edu/imr/indicators
Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS)	http://hedsftp.fandm.edu
John Minter Associates-Benchmarks for Higher Education	http://www.edmin.com/jma
National Cooperative DataShare-Benchmark Data Exchange	http://www.edmin.com/jma/ncds.html
Performance Measures for Higher Education in Virginia	http://dit1.state.va.us/dpblpm/pmeduc.htm
Policy Indicators for Higher Education-WICHE	http://www.wiche.edu/rapa/fbook.htm
Southern Universities Group	http://ww2.acs.ncsu.edu/upa/sug.htm

US Department of Education

Digest of Education Statistics, 1995	http://www.ed.gov/pubs/D95
IPEDS Data Gopher	gopher://gopher.ed.gov:100000/11/data/postsec.ipeds
National Postsecondary Education Cooperative	http://nces01.ed.gov/NPEC
Projections of Education Statistics to 2006	http://www.ed.gov/NCES/pubs/proj2006/proj2006.htm

The Condition of Education, 1996	http://www.ed.gov/NCES/pubs/ce/index.html
US Department of Education, Topics A to Z	http://www.ed.gov/topicsaz
US Census Data	http://www.cesus.gov

Accrediting Bodies and other useful and interesting sites

North Central Association Commission of Institutions of Higher Education	http://www.ncacihe.org
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education	http://www.wiche.edu/wiche.htm
Southern Regional Education Board	http://www.peach.net/sreb
AAUP Faculty Data Base	http://tikkun.edu.asu/aaup

Data Dissemination

During the past two years the number of institutions that have developed web sites devoted solely to their self-study endeavors has proliferated. Thanks in part to recent advances in web site development software, particularly Microsoft Office '97, many institutional Self-Study Reports and data compendia can be published directly to an institution's web site. Local area networking and Intranet communications protocol make data and information readily accessible to the entire educational community.

A recent examination of web-based self-study sites revealed no fewer than 30 NCA accredited institutions devoted web-based "homepages" solely to their self-study endeavors. Institutions use these sites to disseminate drafts of the report for internal and external comments, to share with their "publics" the structure and timeline of their evaluative undertakings, and to facilitate the review process itself.

Of particular note were those web sites developed by:

Washburn University	http://www.wuacc.edu/admin/accreditation/index.html
Clark State Community College	http://lib2.clarck.cc.oh.us/NCA/main.html
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities Campus	http://www.opa.pre.umn.edu/accred/study.edu
Michigan Technological University	http://www.admin.mtu.edu/admin/nca

Conclusion

The collection, analysis, and dissemination of data in support of an institution's effort to comply with the requirements for the NCA self-study has been expedited by new technologies that help to make the entire process more manageable. The use of Internet-based web sites such as those suggested above helps ease the burden of this daunting institutional review. These resources can provide statistics and data on institutional profiles, comparative data, performance indicators, and standards, as well as a wealth of information of the accreditation process itself. Many institutions undergoing NCA self-study have created web sites describing the process they have engaged in and presenting the product of their self-study.

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Using Technological Applications for Intra- and Inter-Campus Collaboration in Self-Study

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Introduction

The College of Saint Benedict (CSB) and Saint John's University (SJU) are two Catholic, Benedictine liberal arts colleges located five miles apart in Central Minnesota. Saint Benedict's is a college for women and Saint John's a college for men. The 3,500 undergraduate students of these two colleges share one common education. Saint Benedict's and Saint John's have a common core curriculum, identical major requirements, and a common academic calendar. Most departments are joint. For instance, there is one admission's office, a single registrar's office, a joint computing services department, a single institutional research and assessment office, and one Mathematics Department.

The two undergraduate colleges at the CSB and SJU are conducting self-study for continued accreditation as two separate institutions. Each institution has (1) five teams addressing each of the NCA Criteria, (2) Chairpersons for each team, and (3) a faculty Campus Coordinator for each campus. The Provost and Institutional Research and Assessment Director, who work coordinately for the Presidents of CSB and SJU, have ultimate responsibility for the self-study.

The fact that all academic operations are shared by CSB and SJU creates a situation requiring much collaboration. Although faculty work for both institutions, other operations are still organizationally separate, and the two campuses are physically separated by five miles. All of this makes meeting and collaborative work difficult to arrange for the self-study teams as they address coordinate issues together and individual campus issues separately.

To reduce these difficulties, CSB/SJU developed an Internet web site with associated e-mail applications, Net News Groups, and Exchange Public Folders. These applications were developed by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and presented to self-study team members during a kick-off workshop for self-study. However, the teams either did not use the applications we developed, or they adopted their own applications to fit the way they worked.

This paper gives our preliminary observations as to why the use of computer applications has or has not occurred thus far in the self-study process. Although we anticipate that the greatest use of the Internet is yet to come as the general community and external constituency review of the draft self-studies, we will share what we have learned to date. We hope that this will prove helpful to other institutions who wish to use technology to conduct self-study or to increase collaboration.

Project Impact and the Technological Infrastructure of CSB and SJU

CSB/SJU Computing Services staff of 25 supports a single, rapidly-growing network with more than 1100 PCS ranging from 50MHz 486s to 166MHz Pentiums. In addition approximately 120 Apple Macs, 50 SGI Unix Workstations, and 3 SUN UNIX workstations are supported. Mini-computers provide central processing capabilities for a full complement of administrative and academic applications. The end users of this network include 3,500 undergraduate students, 125 St. John's graduate students, 275 faculty members, 600 staff plus other members of the St. John's Abbey, the Liturgical Press, the Preparatory School, and a monastery of Benedictine sisters.

This infrastructure began formally in February of 1992 when the academic and administrative computing departments were combined. At that time no formal plan for academic computing existed, and the department had been sorely underfunded. In the first half of 1992, a faculty committee, the JCAC (Joint Committee on Academic Computing) put together a needs assessment that provided the basis for an initial strategic plan and a five-year $10 million project that came to be named Project IMPACT. The first year of IMPACT was approved and initiated in July 1993.

We are now in the project's fifth year, and a number of things have been accomplished. First, every building, whether an academic building containing classrooms or a service building for the physical plant department, is connected to the campus network with fiber. Each building is internally cabled with category five wire for voice and data, and in many cases coaxial cable for video was either installed or upgraded. Each campus decided how this should be accomplished.

When we started the project, the local area network served only a few science departments. As we began network development, we determined that our strategy must be to build *one* network that gave access to technology for all disciplines and all administrative services on both campuses. The idea was that students, faculty, and staff could access the software and information they needed from any networked workstation in any location on either campus—an important concept for a community separated by five miles.

To accomplish this, hardware and software had to be standardized, and control of equipment centralized. In this way, we could move desktop systems where capabilities best matched needs. Part of our plan was to provide a networked workstation for every faculty and staff desktop and plenty of workstations for student access. All student dormitory rooms were networked so that students could access information on our local Intranet or on the Internet directly from computers in their rooms if they had network-capable computers. Support for all of these users was assured through the creation of a Help Desk system, our single point of contact for computing issues and support requests.

In summary, before CSB and SJU began self-study, we had networked the two campuses, had made a number of applications, such as e-mail, available to all faculty, staff, and students, and had acquired the staff and developed the organization to support the network.

During the last several years, expertise in using the Web for various administrative and instructional purposes has grown dramatically at CSB and SJU. The appointments of monastic Webmasters at St. Benedict's Monastery and St. John's Abbey provided the expertise to develop sophisticated web sites. However, in contrast to Project IMPACT, Internet applications at CSB/SJU have largely remained idiosyncratic products of individual faculty and students. Virtually all student, faculty, administrative, and staff users are free to produce their own web pages.

Self-Study at CSB/SJU and the Use of Network and Internet Applications

Beginning in Spring 1997, faculty and staff at CSB/SJU successfully established the design and direction for self-study for continued accreditation. Faculty and staff generated focusing questions as a starting place to apply the five NCA Criteria for self-study to CSB/SJU. The CSB Board of Trustees and the SJU Boards of Regents also framed two central questions they hoped would be answered through the self-study process. The CSB/SJU Coordinate Cabinet then refined the self-study design and recommended members for the self-study teams. These teams consist of both faculty and administrators, and membership is equally divided between men and women. One of every five people on the teams is a member of one of the monastic communities.

The self-study process began with a workshop for Coordinating Team members in August 1997. The workshop's goals were to orient the team members to the self-study process and to develop team strategies that would avoid duplication of effort. The Campus Coordinators engaged the team members in group problem solving by posing the question "Should we combine self-study teams from CSB and SJU into one coordinating team for each criterion?" The Coordinators modeled the self-study process and assisted the team members to isolate sets of strengths and concerns about combining the teams. The team members then evaluated these lists and decided that the CSB and SJU teams should combine into one team for each criterion. They would later divide into subgroups when they decided that a particular topic needed separate attention for either CSB or SJU. In fact, in most cases, the combined teams subdivided into dyads, often a mix of CSB and SJU faculty or staff, to conduct their work as the semester progressed.

The Internet and e-mail applications developed for self-study were demonstrated at the workshop. Wayne Greeley, a work-study student, did most of the technical work with assistance and guidance from the Institutional Research and Assessment Director, the Campus Coordinators, and various other faculty and staff. Two types of applications were developed. The first was a web site to post drafts and finished team reports and to ease communication with the Coordinators and the Institutional Assessment office. The second was a series of News Groups and Exchange Public Folders for use by the teams and Campus Coordinators.

The Website is on a UNIX server while the e-mail system and the Exchange Folders ran in a Windows NT environment. A few small problems in access for the two systems were solved fairly quickly. At that time, CSB/SJU was finishing the upgrading of most users on the network to a Windows NT operating system for e-mail, and variation in the types of Windows operating systems also posed an obstacle. (A few diehard computer scientists and physicists kept their Unix workstations.)

Team members asked many questions about the applications and their use in the workshop. We reviewed our intention to use the Internet applications in partial fulfillment of the new NCA requirement to notify our external constituencies that we are conducting self-study. This led to the Criterion One (Mission) team using the demonstration site to explore the presentation of the CSB, SJU, and Coordinate Mission during the workshop itself, the first in a series of "data mining" expeditions on the CSB/SJU web site on the part of the teams, the Coordinators, and the IR&A Director.

The principal difference between Internet and Intranet applications, as we developed them for the teams, is one of restricted access. The Internet applications we developed were not restricted to either internal or external users. The News Group e-mail applications, the initial Intranet application, was restricted to internal CSB/SJU users but did not have further restrictions. It never occurred to us that the team members would object to members of other teams viewing their communication, but this was significant.

In September, the teams selected the key questions to be addressed under the NCA criteria. Each team followed the same steps. They first described the key groups and processes through which CSB and SJU accomplish their mission and purposes. Then they collected documentation such as reports, committee minutes, or new data as needed. The teams then evaluated this documentation and wrote summary reports of strengths, concerns, and recommended actions. None of them used either the Web site or the News Groups, although they did use e-mail to communicate with each other and the Coordinators. Most teams circulated paper drafts of their reports among their members. Those teams that did post draft reports used Discussion Forums through individual faculty home pages on the WEB, public and private e-mail folders, and shared disk drive space restricted to teams or working groups who were part of teams.

We believe there are several explanations for the teams' failure to use the web site and the News Groups. For example, some felt the need for a private working space to discuss their data and evaluations before they released them for review by other teams and the general community. Still others were not confident enough in their writing skills to present their work to the larger academic community. However, the principal deterrent seems to be a familiar one: many team members did not feel confident enough in their present level of computer skills and had insufficient time to upgrade them given the other demands on their time.

Conclusion

At this writing, the first phase of self-study at CSB and SJU is almost complete. The ten NCA teams are working towards completion of their reports, and two first drafts are in production for review by the entire campus community and external constituencies. Although the process is not complete, we can draw some preliminary conclusions and the implications for collaborative effort within and between CSB and SJU. As we mentioned, we anticipate that the greatest use of the Internet is yet to come as the general community and external constituency review of the draft self-studies. We will have more definitive conclusions when we complete this next phase of the self-study.

As a general observation, it is important to note that the process of self-study has equal importance with the actual written product. The process began with selection of the two Campus Coordinators. The CSB and SJU Campus Coordinators meet several general criteria. First, they are recently-tenured faculty with some experience in shared governance. They are from moderate-sized academic departments with balanced concerns for general education and the major field of study. The CSB Campus Coordinator has special skills in data collection and analysis, and in group dynamics. The SJU Campus Coordinator is skilled in computer applications and the CSB/SJU network and has experience with off-campus programs.

The Campus Coordinators and the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment have conducted periodic process evaluation throughout the self-study to date and plan to continue to do so. One of their findings is that team members see working with other members of their teams as a very important part of the self-study process. They have learned about what other people do. Administrators and faculty each acquired an appreciation for the value of the others' point of view.

As the teams worked, they discovered documents and policies that were new to them, which they found to be of great value in learning about the two colleges as separate entities and as a coordinate operation. Collaboration requires some shared understanding of what participants do, their interests and needs, and the desired outcomes from collaborative effort. Networked computer applications are helpful in removing obstacles to communication and in creating an environment conducive to collaboration.

A final important point about the intersection of the self-study process at CSB and SJU with the use of networked computer applications is that the process of self-study is not a one-time event but has long-term implications. From the beginning, the Presidents at both institutions made it clear that the self-study would be the basis for the next round of strategic planning at CSB and SJU. Consequently, the teams feel confident that their efforts will have value to the institutions beyond the self-study. As a footnote to this, almost all the members of the teams have expressed the desire to stay involved with the self-study process after their group completes its report.

In summary, we found that networked computer applications do help the collaborative process. They have enabled us to build a place for storing shared documents and data. Additionally, they have helped the collaborative process through improved communication. Intranet applications can help to involve team members when used as a tool to build consensus and commitment. We note, however, the importance of limited access and some degree of privacy for team members to work as a group.

Although the teams did not use the News Groups we initially set up, our efforts encouraged them to use other existing applications or to develop their own in some cases. This brings up the very important point that team members must be allowed to use the applications that best suit the way they work. If they are comfortable with what they will be using, networked computer applications are more likely to be seen as a valuable tool for tapping the expertise of other participants, including external constituencies. They also allow members of the teams to plug in to internal processes as they unfold even when they are separated by time and distance. In the case of the IR&A Director and Campus Coordinators, this allows for the diagnoses and correction of problems before they divert working groups from their tasks.

We have the following advice for those who are considering using Internet and Intranet applications in self-study:

- Keep it simple. Applications that foster communication are more important than an elaborate Web site. For example, e-mail is an important tool that is already familiar to most users.
- Let the collaborative work define the need for applications rather than vice-versa. Don't overbuild at the start of self-study.
- Be flexible and responsive to team needs and the phases of team growth and development. Leave room for the participants to choose or develop their own applications as much as possible.
- Teams will still need training, modeling, and support in all aspects of the self-study, including the use of networked computer applications.

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The Role of Academic Departments and Administrative Units in the Accreditation

Katy E. Marre

A Self-Study Report serves multiple purposes and has multiple audiences. In one document, it brings into focus, for multiple audiences, a view of the whole institution. Internally, the audiences of faculty, students, administrators, staff, trustees, alumni, and local community are both consumers and creators of the self-study. Externally, the Evaluation Team, Readers' Panel or Review Committee, and the Commission are its audiences. The Self-Study Coordinator and the institutional Steering Committee have the task of obtaining information that will become the "performance" for these audiences. A good self-study is above all evaluative: that is to say, it evidences what value judgments and educational decisions the institution has made and why it considers these parts of its vision to strengthen and improve its educational programs and institutional practices. My remarks are about the kinds of questions that may be asked of academic departments and administrative units for obtaining information from them to guide them in what I would call their individual, smaller self-studies, which become the basis of the larger institutional self-study.

A good starting point for the self-study process is to develop an overall set of questions for directing departments or units in their individual self-studies. In designing these questions, it is useful to keep in mind that departments/ schools and administrative units—indeed every office in an institution—all maintain some kind of data on their activities as part of their normal operations. Moreover, they routinely receive requests for information, some for overall institutional data collection, others for specific purposes, and also for their own operational needs. The questions, therefore, should creatively draw upon existing, ongoing departmental and unit data-gathering activities, so that they are able to respond to the questions by drawing upon information that is readily available. The questions should not ask for information that is significantly different from what departments, units, or institutional research offices would gather normally for their assessment, evaluative, and planning activities. The information sought should reflect departments' educational decisions and planning in the context of NCA's General Institutional Requirements and Criteria for Accreditation. This does not mean, however, that new data may not be generated, or that available data cannot be organized in a new way, or again that specific new research may not be requested. The purpose of these smaller self-studies is to represent strengths, concerns, and planning in their respective areas as these are an integral part of the purpose and goals of the whole institution. At the University of Dayton, the guidelines for these smaller, individual self-studies specified a narrative of no more than 10 pages and a two page summary of the same.

The function and importance of these smaller departmental and administrative unit self-studies become clear as the summaries become parts of the fabric of the larger, coherent institutional self-study. Again using the University of Dayton self-study process as an illustration, these smaller self-studies served yet another function. The 10 page narratives and their summaries also became resource documents for their respective departments and administrative units in the Resource Room prepared for the Evaluation Team. Each department and unit self-study thus provided for Team members a snapshot of itself in these self-studies for further reference and clarification where necessary. Thus, the form of the questions, the kinds of materials they ask for, and the evaluative perspective of the narrative, in large measure will determine the extent of the writing tasks of other subcommittees, and eventually of the Self-Study Coordinator or chair who integrates all the parts into a coherent whole document.

The following are two sets of guidelines, one for academic department self-studies and the other for administrative unit self-studies used, at the University of Dayton. Each self-study is requested to be no more than 10 pages with a two-page summary of the same. Specific headings are identified to facilitate the organization of the ten page narrative and the two page summary.

Katy E. Marre is Professor of English and Associate Dean of the Graduate School, University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio.

Appendix A

NCA Self-Study
Academic Departments/Programs: Guidelines for Self-Study

© Katy Marre

This request is for a departmental self-study in a narrative of no more than 10 pages using a 12 pt. font in double space, and a two page summary of the same. The 10 page self-study will serve as a resource appendix, whereas the two page summary will be part of the final report.

There are two parts to the materials requested: narrative (indicated with an "N" in the margin next to each narrative section) and data. Information requested is for both undergraduate and graduate programs. Materials relating to graduate programs will also be used as needed in the Graduate School section in the Self-Study Report. Please organize your materials under the headings as listed in the following outline. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

I Mission and Goals

N (A) List the major objectives of your department/programs and how they relate to the mission of the University:

1. Teaching: undergraduate and graduate (include any nontraditional instruction and/ or delivery if applicable);
2. Research: sponsored and non-sponsored;
3. Service to the University, profession, and field.

N (B) How is the department/programs organized?

N (C) What do you consider to be the academic priorities of your department programs?

II Academic Programs

N (A) Describe the degree programs your department is involved in.

1. Undergraduate
2. Graduate
3. Other (e.g. special programs, nontraditional, etc.)

N (B) Describe your department/programs' contributions to General Education, Basic Skills, and service to other programs (include credit hours as applicable).

N (C) Describe the balance and relationship between undergraduate and graduate course work in your department/programs.

N (D) What curricular collaborations and other interdisciplinary relationships does your department/programs have with other units of the University (including Service Learning, etc.)?

N (E) Identify new technologies and/or pedagogy used in teaching and research.

III Faculty

(A) (1) List current instructional staff (academic ranks and degrees, part-time, adjunct, etc.) and describe changes in faculty over the last three years (i.e., '93-'94, '94-95, '95-'96). Have you been successful in hiring faculty you have sought for open positions? If not, why not?

(2) Provide up-to-date faculty vitae (5 pages maximum each) for all faculty members, full and part-time in an Appendix.

(3) List service rendered to the academic field (e.g., serving on editorial boards, officers of professional organizations, professional journal published by a department, colloquia, seminars, symposia, and others), and to the community.

N (B) Describe briefly efforts made by your department/programs in faculty development (e.g. renewals, enrichment, planning).

IV Students

(A) Provide data, insofar as possible, in the following areas. Please use data from the data sheets provided for item #s 1, 2, & 3, except for double majors and minors. Provide narrative explanation if it is necessary to use data other than that provided for #s 1, 2, & 3.

1. Number of undergraduate majors/minors/double-majors–listed separately.
2. Number of active graduate students.
3. Number of degrees awarded 199- -199- (by academic year): (a) undergraduate, (b) graduate
4. Indicate major professions (up to ten) chosen by your graduates (a) undergraduate and (b) graduate (placement of students).
5. Students participating in co-op education, internships, or other similar programs.
6. Number of students going on to graduate school.

(B) If possible, please provide data in the following areas:

1. Student quality (a) for undergraduate, if available to you, (b) for graduate programs.
2. Test score averages, if applicable.

N (C) Describe any special efforts your department/programs have made to recruit students (a) undergraduate (include minority students), and (b) graduate (include minority students). How successful have you been? Discuss any problems in recruiting. Describe also any special efforts your department/programs have made for retention of students (a) undergraduate, and (b) graduate.

N (D) Describe ongoing assessment activities in your department /programs. Briefly evaluate the achievement of student outcomes in (a) undergraduate programs, and (b) graduate programs and indicate the ways in which outcomes information is being used as feedback.

V Major Accomplishments and All Changes Since the 19-- Self-Study

N (A) What two or three significant or important accomplishments demonstrate progress toward departmental goals (e.g., trends in number of majors; changes in curricular emphases; changes resulting from use of new technologies and/or pedagogy; resulting from assessment; level of faculty publications & achievement in scholarly/ research/ creative/ professional activities and in service; noteworthy achievements of students, etc.)?

N (B) Summarize briefly the present effectiveness of your department/programs in comparison with that of the previous ten years, noting its strengths and weaknesses, the distinctiveness of your programs, the accomplishments of your faculty and students.

N (C) Describe briefly how you have addressed the overall strengths and concerns raised by the 19-- NCA Team Visit as they relate to your department/programs.

VI Current Needs

N Realistically evaluate the adequacy of your resources in light of your mission, the University's mission, number of majors, faculty research, etc.

VII Future Plans

N Briefly describe your department/programs' plans for the Year 2005. Comment on the kind of planning processes you have in operation that lead you to these conclusions.

VIII Self-Study Process

N Describe the self-study process in your department/programs specifying the involvement of your faculty and staff in the preparation of this self-study.

IX Additional information or documentation appropriate to your department/unit (as applicable)

In addition to your full narrative, please provide a two page condensation of the narrative sections using the above headings. Please submit both reports to the Graduate School, St. Mary's Hall, Rm. 200, by November 1, 199-.

Dean

Department Chair or Unit Head

Appendix B

NCA Self-Study
Administrative Department/Unit: Guidelines for Self-Study

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This request is for a department/unit self-study in a narrative of no more than 10 pages using a 12 pt. font in double space, and a two page summary of the same. The 10 page self-study will serve as a resource appendix, whereas the two page summary will be part of the final report. The narrative should be organized under the headings in the following outline.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

I Mission and Goals

(A) List the major objectives of your unit/program and how they relate to the mission of the University:

(B) What do you consider to be the priorities of your unit/program?

II Organization and Programs

How is the department/unit organized?

III Major Accomplishments and All Changes Since the Last NCA Self-Study

(A) What specific accomplishments demonstrate progress toward your department/unit's goals?

(B) Summarize briefly the effectiveness of your department/unit by comparison with the previous ten years, noting its strengths and weaknesses, the distinctiveness of your programs, and the accomplishments of your department/unit.

(C) Describe briefly how you have addressed the overall strengths and concerns raised by the 1987 NCA Site Visit Team as they relate to your department/unit.

(D) Where applicable, describe ongoing student outcomes assessment activities in your department/unit. Briefly evaluate the achievement of student outcomes, and indicate the ways in which outcomes information is being used as feedback.

IV Current Needs

Realistically evaluate your resources in light of your mission and the University mission.

V Future Plans

Briefly describe your department/unit plans for the Year 2005. Comment on the kind of planning processes you have in operation that lead you to these conclusions.

VI Self-Study Process

Describe the self-study process in your department/unit specifying the involvement of your faculty and staff in the preparation of this self-study.

VII Additional Information Appropriate to Your Dept/Unit (as applicable).

In addition to your full narrative, please provide a two page condensation of the same using the above headings. Please submit both reports to the Graduate School, St. Mary's Hall, Rm. 200, by November 1, 199-.

Supervisor ____________________

Department / Unit Head ____________________

Self-Study and Institutional Renewal; Or, What to Do When They All Fall Down

Patrice Caldwell
Everett L. Frost
Reneé Neely

Background

As it prepared for a decennial self-study, Eastern New Mexico University faced many challenges and opportunities confronting other institutions. Externally, public sentiment about higher education was having an impact. Legislators looked less favorably on higher education, and new legislative priorities often benefited prisons, welfare reform, and public schools. As a result, funding levels for higher education were unpredictable.

Internally, the university had been experiencing declining or at best stable enrollments, and the enrollments were expected to continue to inch downwards. Budgets already had started to decline as a result of previous drops in enrollment. The university was looking at ways to reverse the enrollment trends.

On the eve of the self-study process in 1994, Eastern had some major tasks to accomplish. Not only had the mission statement not been revised in twenty years, but the strategic plan was not developed. Following the 1987 review, the university had undertaken several false starts in the development of a strategic plan. These included the use of external consultants to provide training workshops. The most recent false start in the development of a strategic plan was an administrative retreat in the fall of 1994. This retreat ended rather abruptly and prematurely after an accident in which many administrators were injured when the deck on which they were standing collapsed and "they all fell down."

Badly shaken, the university entered the self-study period with a need to update its mission and implement a strategic plan, as well as address New Mexico's public and legislative "disconnect" with the goals of higher education. It also needed to regroup from the accident and begin to capitalize on some of the strengths of the institution.

Three years later, Eastern found itself in an enviable position. Not only had it received the best review in its history of accreditation, but the university found itself not only receiving state and national recognition for innovative programs but also well positioned to undertake additional complex issues. In retrospect, the self-study process precipitated unit improvements and broad-based initiatives that led to institutional renewal and external recognition. This presentation will include a discussion of the features of the self-study that were instrumental in Eastern's progress and the lessons learned. It will conclude with a discussion of how these features linked to specific outcomes of the institution.

The Self-Study Process: Lessons Learned

As a result of the self-study, the university learned many valuable lessons about the process of institutional self-scrutiny as linked to institutional renewal. These lessons could be applied to a variety of institutional types. The following summarize some of the lessons that were learned, and so are presented in a general, rather than a particular, sense.

☐ Lesson 1: Create manageable groups and use existing groups

Using existing groups whenever possible during the self-study process relieves some of the burden on campus personnel that self-study necessarily engenders. Senates and councils, for example, can serve as focus groups in soliciting input throughout the self-study period. These groups also function as disseminators of information to constituents about the importance and benefits of self-study and about the team visit.

If an institution uses a Steering Committee to direct the self-study, the size and composition of that committee will have an impact on the efficiency of the process and the quality of its outcomes. Selection of the committee members can be governed by different considerations. Members can be selected because they can write, analyze statistics and budgets, make recommendations for change, conduct interviews, and/or gather data. Or committee members can be selected to represent constituency groups or functional units. If committee members are chosen because they will represent a group rather than an expertise, be prepared to look elsewhere for that expertise. However, choosing members based on constituencies recognizes the investment that all members of the institutional community have in the self-study process. This increases the likelihood that they will understand and accept the institutional priorities and support steps toward institutional renewal.

☐ Lesson 2: Generate useful documents

Report writing is inevitable, and creating guidelines for their preparation goes far in standardizing them and removing the writer's anxiety. If, for example, every unit on campus (academic and administrative units, senates, key committees) will be asked to prepare a Self-Study Report, units should be provided detailed guidelines to ensure that the desired information is obtained. Another institution's guidelines can serve as a point of departure in developing a guidelines booklet. Along with these guidelines, provide units with institutionally generated data about their resources and productivity.

Consider asking campus groups to prepare a brief preliminary Self-Study Report. Ask groups to assess the years between the present and the last self-study, summarizing major changes in resources, programs, policies, and goals, and identifying distinctive features. Such an exercise serves several purposes:

- since the final Self-Study Report must identify major institutional changes, these preliminary reports will facilitate completing that requirement
- unit members will be better able to take stock of their present situation by evaluating their past
- most units inevitably take pride in recognizing the dynamism of their group

The usefulness of unit self-study reports may lie more with the unit's scrutiny of its own strengths and weaknesses and plans for addressing them. Such scrutiny has the potential to lead to improvement, and some units report making changes during and as a result of their self-study. Of course, information in the unit self-studies will contribute importantly to the institutional self-study.

Collecting all assessment plans and their annual updates is essential to evaluation of how well an institution is accomplishing its purposes. (Unit self-studies should also reflect consideration of assessment data.) Assessment updates that provide data—both statistical and anecdotal—facilitate the task of proving that the institution is meeting its objectives, especially if non-instructional units as well as academic units regularly assess their effectiveness.

☐ Lesson 3: Wise use of external consultants and institutional staff

Most institutions have adequate in-house expertise to accomplish tasks of the self-study. For example, should an institution wish to evaluate community relations, planning and analysis staff, marketing faculty, or statistics faculty could conduct a survey and analyze the results. Institutional research offices should prove to be invaluable in providing the official data for units and the Steering Committee to conduct their analyses.

At times, however, an outside consultant can be a catalyst to the kind of activity that drives a self-study. For example, an institution conducting a review of mission and institutional priorities may find that a consultant can guide a faculty or administrative group through a SWOT analysis (strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats) leading to identification of mission, focus, goals, and priorities. Institutional staff may use the consultant's model to conduct a SWOT analysis with other constituencies, e.g., students and professional and support staff. Combining all groups' conclusions will lead to a fairly accurate view of the campus community's sense of its mission and long-range goals. Nonetheless, because rewriting mission or the institution's strategic plan will require more than just consensus of constituency groups, it is the senior administration that will have responsibility for working with the governing board in deciding new directions for the institution.

☐ **Lesson 4: Create campus commitment to self-study**

Self-study can lead to other forms of institutional renewal if a campus-wide commitment can be made to the purposes of self-study. Those institutions that choose to prepare the self-study with broad input from campus constituents and by informing all campus constituents of the purposes of self-study create an entire community of stakeholders in the process. That is, the outcomes of the self-study—and even the conclusions of the Team Report—will be recognized by the campus constituents as a benefit for the campus. The degree of commitment will depend on the degree of involvement of constituency groups as well as individuals. Providing updates about the process to student and employee senates and to governing and advisory councils is a simple recognition of their importance to the process. Asking these same groups to provide input, e.g., read drafts of the Self-Study Report, also signals the value of their role and increases the integrity of the report.

An ongoing publicity campaign about the self-study process and its purposes contributes to campus commitment. For example, electronic bulletin boards and such in-house publications as the student newspaper, weekly campus bulletin, and alumni newsletter, provide excellent means of keeping the campus updated. Electronic distribution of reports and self-study drafts helps with both the input and information processes.

Since most campuses have a vital (symbiotic) relationship with an off-campus community, a sense of commitment to the value of self-study should be cultivated with external constituents. Using the local newspaper to publicize self-study and inviting off-campus community persons, (e.g., a local businessman and a local schoolteacher who are both alums) to serve on the Steering Committee are effective ways of creating stakeholders and spokespersons in the local community.

☐ **Lesson 5: Multi-tasking is possible, but...**

Most institutions find that self-study is enough of an undertaking without having to engage in other extraordinary initiatives such as writing a mission statement or engaging in strategic planning. However, self-study is often a time of reckoning, when self-scrutiny reveals an institutional assessment plan that is not comprehensive or a fifty-year-old mission statement that is hopelessly inaccurate. At such times, if an institution is lucky in its combination of committed staff and energetic administration, multi-tasking is possible and even beneficial. For example, since self-study involves mission review, updating strategic priorities is not an unlikely parallel activity.

Outcomes of Self-Study and Planning Processes: Poised for the Future

☐ **Sharp focus on mission and institutional priorities**

Because Criterion One calls for an examination of the mission, it is natural that institutions will have a better understanding of the mission as a result of the self-study. What followed for Eastern went beyond what it had previously experienced in self-studies. Conducting the mission review and early strategic planning processes simultaneously resulted in a broad-based understanding and acceptance of the strategic priorities of the university. Currently, the priorities shape many day-to-day decisions and are beginning to have an impact on the budgeting process.

☐ **Organizational changes**

As a result of the self-study it became evident that some administrative restructuring would be appropriate. One area in which this was important was distance education, one of the institution's six strategic priorities. The position of Director of Extended Learning was eliminated, and a matrix management system for distance education was implemented.

Taking advantage of its momentum, the university created the position of Executive Director for Institutional Renewal. This position allows for an aggressive linking of strategic priorities and external opportunities to realize those priorities.

☐ Leveraging unique institutional opportunities

Eastern has provided interactive instructional television courses for almost twenty years. At the time the self-study was initiated, it began to focus on the use of technology in the classroom. Through the self-study, the university identified some areas of opportunity, and it began to take advantage of these. Area schools were interested in collaborative efforts and training with technology, and this led to partnership opportunities.

Activities in the area of distance education and technology began to attract external attention. Eastern began to participate in activities associated with the development of Western Governor's University and, soon after the NCA visit, was identified as the pilot institution for the state. The university also attracted other interest and was nominated for and later granted the Pew Leadership Award for the Renewal of Undergraduate Education.

☐ Confidence building

There is an adage to the effect that success breeds success. From the university perspective, Eastern has learned that success certainly breeds confidence. As a result of the success of the self-study process and the other external recognition, Eastern is confident it can resolve other complex issues and is enthusiastically pursuing them. It now is working on re-visioning general education, re-forming the three-campus governance system, and defining what it means to be a campus wholly centered around student learning.

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Integrating the NCA Self-Study Process with Strategic Planning, Outcomes Assessment, and Program Development

Duane Wood
James Colman

Introduction

To some, the self-study process required by NCA is viewed as burdensome reporting and paperwork, a job that institutions must complete to retain their accreditation. Once completed, the institution can forget about the self-study until it is once again required for continued accreditation. Admittedly, the self-study process is demanding in both time and effort, especially if an institution has to instigate one or more of the activities required in the Self-Study Report. Creating and directing a multitude of new committees just for the self-study adds a large amount of extra work and frustration.

This presentation seeks to examine the importance of the self-study process from a "photographic" perspective. In other words, institutions should view the periodically required self-study as a "snapshot" of current processes and procedures. It shows the way an institution is functioning and whether it is functioning well. The recently completed self-study at Cedarville College provides a good example of linking the continued accreditation efforts to institutional functions that are already in place. The following sections highlight several key areas within the College operation and demonstrate ways in which these areas fed directly into the self-study.

The Importance of a Clear Mission

A brief word about institutional mission is important before continuing. An institution that has difficulty putting its stated mission into operation will also have difficulty performing an adequate self-study. The mission drives the functions, decisions, and policies of an institution and its clarity provides the "focus" for the self-study "snapshot."

Planning

It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of strategic planning. It is also unlikely that an institution can successfully begin to plan only when it is time to apply for continued accreditation.

An ongoing planning process at Cedarville College has been in place for the last 20 years. Over the years, the process has grown and developed and now involves the entire institution in a yearly cycle of determining planning priorities. The goal is to generate campus-wide participation in the direction of the institution.

Each academic and staff department prepares a yearly planning document that projects two to four years into the future. The process is very open, with individual input within each department. The document examines current needs (facilities, personnel, programs); potential future opportunities; and future needs for pursuing new opportunities. Completed documents are submitted to divisional planning committees.

Cedarville College has six divisions, each headed by a vice president. The divisional committees refine and prioritize the departmental plans based on the priorities and vision established by the vice president of each division. This results in a divisional plan that is submitted to the Strategic Planning Committee.

The Strategic Planning Committee is led by the Director of Planning, who is appointed by the President. The committee is comprised of one planning representative from each division and two at-large members. The representatives present their divisional plans and the committee evaluates and prioritizes the suggested institutional directions. The result is an institutional planning document that is submitted to the Administration. The Administration reviews the document and uses the content to generate institutional planning priorities.

Although the Planning Committee is an important part of the institutional process, other entities are actively engaged in planning. These include campus task teams and *ad hoc* committees that are charged with a specific task, such as designing a new building program document, designing the campus network, or creating graduate programs.

At Cedarville, the planning and budget processes are totally separate. Strategic planning, however, strongly informs the budget decisions at the department, division, and institution levels.

Assessment

Four years prior to systematizing assessment activities and developing the Cedarville College assessment program, the academic vice president appointed a General Education Task Team. The charge to the task team was to determine the knowledge, skills, and values a student graduating from Cedarville College should have if it were a new institution of higher education with an identical mission. Secondly, they were to design a general education program that would accomplish the stated objectives.

The General Education committee included at least one faculty representative from each of the twelve academic departments. Over a two-year period, this task team, with input from periodic campus-wide faculty meetings, developed a set of general education objectives and student outcomes. Then they developed a set of recommendations to revise the general education program to accomplish these new objectives. The work of this General Education Task Team gave the institution an excellent component to integrate into the assessment program as it was developed.

In 1993-94, the members of each academic department developed an assessment plan for the majors in their department. A campus-wide Outcomes Assessment Committee was formed, which was under the leadership of the Director of Institutional Research and included an assessment representative from each of the academic departments as well as the Associate Dean for Student Services. In 1994-95, each educational support services department had to prepare its assessment plan as well.

Each departmental assessment plan was required to show how its intended major outcomes/objectives fit with the college mission. These outcomes included cognitive, attitudinal/affective, and behavioral. From a department's "long-list" of outcomes, three to five outcomes were selected for each major for inclusion in the first phase of assessment. Projected costs and resources were identified, an assessment timetable established, and implementation procedures delineated.

The department plans were submitted to the Outcomes Assessment Committee for analysis, critique, and recommendations. Each year the departments resubmit their plans with the past year's activities, results, proposed changes, future plans, and recommended actions to be taken, if any. A General Education Committee composed of faculty and chaired by the Assistant Academic Vice President also submits an annual assessment plan and conducts student outcomes assessment for general education.

Since three annual cycles have been completed, several curricular changes and other program improvements have now been enacted as a result of the assessment program. Obviously, the data and results of a department's assessment program become key data and input into its strategic plan as well.

Program Development

As a mission-driven institution, Cedarville College has been guided by its purpose statement, which is "to provide an education consistent with biblical truth." Seven institutional objectives have been established out of this statement.

In 1990, as the College looked forward to the twenty-first century, twenty benchmarks were established to characterize the institution as it pursued its mission. One of the benchmarks signifies that Cedarville College is to be primarily an undergraduate institution. Selected graduate programs could be offered assuming they strengthened the undergraduate program.

The academic vice president appointed a Graduate Task Team in 1995 to conduct a study into the feasibility of offering its first master's program, an interdisciplinary M.S. in Administration degree. Several factors influenced the timing of this decision including: (1) the continued growth and development of the College, (2) the successful implementation of the A.B.E.T. accredited B.S.E.E. and B.S.M.E. programs, (3) the completion of the nationally-recognized computer network, and (4) the continued accreditation review by the North Central Association in May 1997. The hope was that one campus accreditation visit would accomplish the authorization to offer master's degrees as well as the continued accreditation evaluation.

The Graduate Task Team consisted of faculty with expertise from key disciplines and departments that would design and deliver the potential M.S.A. program. Individual task team members also served as liaisons with their respective departments facilitating their participation and assistance in the feasibility study and in the development of the prospective course syllabi.

The feasibility study assessed the demand for master's degrees generally, for master's degrees with a Christian world/life perspective, for degrees in the career specializations to be offered initially, and for master's degrees by Cedarville College alumni and upperclassmen. It reviewed existing and projected faculty and supporting staff resources; financial resources (including both direct and indirect capital and operating costs plus projected revenues and expenditures for differing numbers of matriculants); and physical resources such as classrooms, office space, library, and computer/educational technology support.

The degree requirements, curriculum design, course syllabi, initial areas of career specialization, admission requirements, course offering schedules, marketing strategies, and organizational and governance arrangements were all addressed. In addition, the potential positive and negative impact upon the undergraduate programs, the institutional culture, and the fit with the institutional mission were significant areas of consideration.

Finally, the results of this effort were compared to the North Central Association and State of Ohio requirements and guidelines for offering this graduate program. Key elements of the feasibility study were reflected in departmental and institutional strategic plans. The feasibility study also was the basis for a separate chapter devoted to the master's authorization request and was included in the North Central Self-Study Report.

Connection with the North Central Self-Study

So how does all the information above create a "snapshot" that is captured by the North Central self-study? How does the self-study seamlessly flow into the operation of the institution? The answer lies in the organization of the self-study.

At the outset, it was determined that the five NCA Criteria for Accreditation would guide the format of the Cedarville College self-study. To this end, the Self-Study Coordinator analyzed the available campus resources and decided to form four separate subcommittees for resources, assessment, planning, and institutional integrity. This design allowed for tremendous savings in work because of the already functioning campus committees. The assessment committee noted above became the assessment subcommittee for the self-study. The previously mentioned planning committee served as the planning subcommittee for the self-study. The other two subcommittees drew from business, personnel, and student services resources that were already in place. As an added benefit, the task team responsible for the development of potential graduate programs served as the resource for an appendix requesting permission from the NCA for Cedarville College to offer graduate programs.

An important aspect of the connection between the self-study and the operations of the institution is the continuing effect of the self-study. When a photograph is taken at different stages in life, one can see change. Positive change should be one of the goals of the self-study "snapshot." Rather than simply taking up shelf space, the self-study can inform and influence decisions from one accreditation visit to the next. The 1987 accreditation of Cedarville College provides an interesting example. A primary concern from the 1987 self-study and site visit was the need for a new music facility. The "picture" of the institution made this very evident. The self-study provided an impetus to move this need to a greater level of importance, and a new Ministry Center that includes a 3400-seat chapel, the Department of Music, and the Division of Christian Ministries was opened in the fall of 1996.

Conclusion

It is true that the self-study process requires a great deal of work. On the other hand, the work is greatly reduced when the necessary parts of the puzzle are already in place. When this is the case, the NCA self-study simply takes a "snapshot" of current institutional practices and procedures. Now all you need to do is go out and compose the "picture"!

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James Colman is Director of Strategic Planning at Cedarville College.

Goals Guiding Process

Edward Payson Hall
Kathie S. Gilbert

Means and Ends

When a newly-appointed Self-Study Coordinator first attends an NCA conference, one piece of repeated advice comes booming through: the process of conducting the self-study is as important as the product. This advice values the means, the doing of the self-study, as well as the end, the report itself. This advice portends greater gain than just a tome that describes a slice of institutional time—a slice that is dated by the time it is read by NCA's consultant/evaluators. In short, in addition to resulting in a report that is a necessary step toward continued accreditation, the conduct of the self-study can and should serve wider institutional goals.

Process

Submission of a timeline for NCA approval is the first significant formal action by the person leading a self-study effort. This forces the Self-Study Coordinator to think in terms of process—the step-by-step part of *doing* self-study. For many the timeline construction task appears to be nothing more than placing one common-sense step in front of another. Timeline models abound at NCA conferences and in NCA publications and should be reviewed for guidance by anyone new to self-study (e.g., select and charge your Steering Committee, determine how your report will be structured, solicit descriptive and evaluative input, organize and compile, edit, edit, edit). However, these timeline models reinforce the sequence-of-obvious-steps notion, and hide the more important "how to" issues that are the necessary grist for the Steering Committee mill.

As soon as the "how to" issues come under (sometimes very heated) discussion by the Steering Committee, the true meaning of what NCA refers to as *process* becomes evident. Process refers to the step-by-step "how to" part of implementing the self-study. And this is the point at which goals should begin to guide process.

Goals

Given the ultimate goal of continued accreditation, establishing the wider institutional goals that will guide the self-study process is another early step. Initially, these goals may be quite general and mimic the lofty goals of an institution's strategic plan, or reflect the goals embedded in the institution's mission statement. However, if these goals are to guide the Steering Committee's "how to" decisions, they must become operationalized—closer to home, more practical in nature, and more specific (e.g., What can we do as a part of self-study that will facilitate the development of a student outcomes assessment culture?; or, How can we solicit input from the faculty in a way that will improve their morale so they will cooperate with the self-study demands placed upon them?; or, How can we convince people to invest in development of the Self-Study Report?). Thus, from the perspective of the Self-Study Coordinator and the Steering Committee, the term "goals" refers to the intended consequences of the step-by-step "how to" decisions that are part of the process of conducting a self-study.

Early on, the Steering Committee at Western New Mexico University (WNMU) identified three institutional goals for the self-study. The self-study should:

- complement strategic planning

- ○ provide opportunities
- ○ offer maximum, meaningful participation

These goals guided the way in which the self-study was conducted, and influenced many of the "how to" decisions along the way.

☐ **Goal 1: Self-study should complement strategic planning**

For more than a decade, WNMU's leadership history could be characterized as a revolving door at the executive level. Faculty and staff had borne the institutional load for so long, with constantly shifting guidance from above, that they had become inured to the many shifts and distrustful that any leader would be around long enough to see anything through to completion.

The university now enjoys a stable leadership that is engaged in thorough, systematic, and ongoing planning processes; however, the perceptions of those in the trenches are slow to change. The current strategic planning process sincerely seeks input from all quarters. Unfortunately, those who have been around for a while have heard many such requests for their participation, yet have seen little come of their efforts to provide input.

The self-study Steering Committee decided to take advantage of these perceptions by presenting the self-study to all constituencies as a bottom-up complement to strategic planning processes—processes from which many faculty and staff might otherwise have chosen to remain aloof.

Given the expenditure of time and energy university-wide to conduct a self-study, the Steering Committee wished to assure that the self-study would influence university planning beyond the NCA site visit. They did not want the Self-Study Report to be a one-shot effort with no follow-through. In other words, the committee embraced some of the faculty and staff perceptions, which it decided to use to its advantage. By publicly presenting the self-study as a complement to strategic planning, the committee counted on the administration's buying into the idea of this kind of grass roots planning input. The administration did, and it continues to do so. For example, the academic vice president plans to revisit departmental reports for two purposes: (1) to point out that many of the issues raised in the initial unit reports have been resolved, and (2) to identify new areas of concern that need to be integrated into strategic and operational planning processes.

☐ **Goal 2: Self-study should provide opportunities**

The second goal was to provide opportunities for those in the trenches to make WNMU—the institution to which they daily devote their skills, knowledge, and energies—a better institution by making their voices heard.

This goal follows from the first. By pointing out that "we," not "they," are conducting the self-study, and that the administration agrees to honor the efforts of contributors, there was increased certainty that "our" voices would be heard. Contributors were assured that the self-study would be a public document, and would be read with interest and in great detail by the administration as well as the NCA Evaluation Team. And just as importantly, the self-study document would be available for them to read—to see what their colleagues were saying and to make sure that their input was honestly presented.

For this goal to be accomplished, the integrity of the process of collecting, compiling, and editing the many inputs to this report was essential. What value are opportunities to have your voice heard, if your voice is silenced or altered by heavy editing? The president publicly stated his desire for a "brutally honest" Self-Study Report, and the Self-Study Coordinator assured contributors and the president that this would be the case. Except for offers of support, queries about progress, and writing their own, clearly identified sections, the president and vice presidents literally "kept their hands off."

☐ **Goal 3: Self-study should offer maximum, meaningful participation**

Maximum, meaningful participation is an obvious goal that is constantly urged at annual NCA conferences, usually with the emphasis on "maximum." The self-study team chose to give equal emphasis to "meaningful," but without dictating what meaningful meant beyond assigning tasks to a broad base of individuals.

Self-study reports were requested from each basic-level unit on campus. Since each unit has its own unique history and configuration of personalities, it was left to the unit leader to determine what "meaningful" meant for his/her unit. The stated intent was to gather the views from the "trenches" of resource needs, strengths (an opportunity to brag), issues and challenges (an opportunity to complain constructively), and suggested options for possible solutions to the issues and challenges. Again, because of the public support by the administration, the integrity of the self-study process was believed. The input received was exactly what we had asked for: the lively and often acerbic views from the trenches.

The Self-Study Coordinator had been involved in other accreditation self-studies and had read a number of Self-Study Reports wherein the participation emphasis obviously was on "maximum." Those reports tend to be produced by relatively small groups created specifically for the task and often read like well-sugared pablum. They served this limited purpose and gathered dust until the next self-study came around. That certainly was not and *is not* the case with the WNMU report. The intimate portrayal of many different perspectives throughout the university will serve as a benchmark to be updated by the originators in their program reviews and other internal assessment documents. WNMU's self-study provided a view that continues to assist the university as it plans for the future.

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Writing the Self-Study Report

Nancy E. Talburt
David E.R. Gay

This workshop session will emphasize the following: (1) organizing principles that reflect the self-study, institution, Criteria for Accreditation, and the General Institutional Requirements (GIRs); (2) text that is succinct and focused; (3) content selected from a variety of sources, not duplicating other materials supplied to the NCA team, and supported by concise appendices and a good selection of resource room materials; (4) text focused on an analysis of effectiveness of the institution and its practices rather than descriptive features of the institution; (5) report format that utilizes stylistic and graphic possibilities.

The *targeted audience* will be new or continuing Self-Study Coordinators, committee members, and other campus representatives involved in self-study and report writing. Throughout the workshop, attention will be directed to the importance of organizing the self-study leading to the kind of report that is desired, consideration of the difference between the actual self-study and writing the report, along with gathering and selecting institutional data to support writing the report.

The format of the workshop presentation will include discussion by the two presenters and will incorporate opportunity for questions and comments from the audience. Handouts will be used to illustrate topics. The Self-Study Report of the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, is the basis for this presentation. The report was prepared during a self-study effort that began in the fall of 1995 and concluded with a team visit in April 1997. The presenters served as co-chairs of the self-study committee.

Items for Discussion

☐ **Some reminders if you are at the beginning of the self-study effort**

Organize the self-study to coordinate with or parallel the desired report organization

- by criteria with introduction, five chapters (or six, if GIRs are put in the text instead of the appendix) and a conclusion chapter
- by special focus topics, with an introduction, a chapter for each focus topic, a chapter treating GIRs and Criteria, and a conclusion chapter
- by divisions of institution or organization chart

Plan for campus-wide participation

- organizational units, such as offices, or divisions on the organization charts complete a survey, a short report, or questionnaire related to the Criteria and GIRs
- constituencies, such as students, alumni, staff, and faculty complete a survey, attend a town meeting, complete a survey or questionnaire (or a sample does), or participate in focus group sessions (survey, town meeting, focus groups, through organizations on campus
- standing committees and governance structures, along with other appropriate groups provide input and data

[Hand-outs will be distributed for one model of data collection.]

☐ **What to do if you are in the middle of the self-study effort**

- Craft a plan for tailoring the results of established self-study groups into the report outline.
- Create an editorial style sheet if you don't have editors (or if you will be editors) to save them time.
- Fill in the gaps in the outline and data by *ad hoc* efforts or new committees.

☐ **What to do if you are at the end of the self-study effort and beginning to write**

- Decide on your guidelines of style, for example the *Chicago Manual of Style.*
- Decide what can be illustrated by sidebars, tables, graphs, pictures, if you have graphics capabilities.
- Decide what can be relegated to appendices.
- Decide what to have on hand in resource room.
- Do all the above by a systematic survey of routine reports and publications, reports of *ad hoc* committees, items collected in the campus self-study, along with routine state or system reports.

☐ **Ideas and suggestions** (regardless of where you are in the process)

- Create a schedule or timeline illustrating the craftsmanship of the report and by whom things will be done.
- Decide on a cover design (for example, using a student composition).
- Decide how to treat the GIRs (for example in a chapter, with associated criteria, or in a chart in an appendix.) [Handouts will be provided.]
- Decide where and how to respond to the concerns of the previous Evaluation Team.
- Consider graphics possibilities to make the report more readable and to illustrate or highlight key points. [Samples will be provided as hand-outs.]
- Begin listing things for inclusion (points, issues, data), items for appendices, and exhibits for the resource room. This way, annotation from the first draft can easily lead the reader to the right place for further data.
- Complete (or have the Office of Institutional Research complete) the Basic Institutional Data Forms (BIDS). You should have copies of BIDs from the beginning, so that data will not be duplicated and the BIDs can be used as the source or the basis of discussion.
- Review the institutional catalogs and handbooks, for points they make, their data, etc. Brief references can be made to them, with page numbers, without unnecessarily duplicating their contents.
- Target a length for the report (for example 100 to 150 pages, even if print is small).
- Include self-critique of the institution throughout (for example, include recommendations for follow-up once issues and problems are identified).
- Seek input widely so that the analysis is balanced, fair and representative of many constituencies, not just the self-study committees, the administration, etc.
- Use a typeface (print) as small as may easily be read, but not too small, and (of course) print on front and back. Consider the overall weight for team member's ease of use. Bigger is not necessarily better. The report should lie flat and not have to be held open.
- Use third person in drafting the final report unless there is a clearly defined first person perspective, which remains the same from first to last, and make it clear whose perspective is being used.
- Distribute copies of the draft and solicit input from all constituencies and units. If technology exists to do so, put the document on line with a built-in response or comment mechanism.
- Concentrate on accomplishments in quality and quantity and and cite the evidence or basis for assessment in each area/criterion, etc., which is treated.
- Include a detailed index.

☐ **Some things to avoid or handle with care**

- Don't do an "equal-time report" in which every unit, school, college, program, office has a paragraph in the report that touches all the same things. On the other hand, include as many units as possible for their distinct and documented accomplishments.
- Focus and give most time to Criterion Three–Educational Purposes, but don't slight the others.
- Don't overlook athletics and other auxiliary units and off-campus activities that share main campus accreditation status.
- Limit description severely and in using it stress only those aspects of the unit or initiative that are unusual or may not be self-evident. The College of Arts and Sciences may include engineering, for example.
- Avoid jargon, inflated claims, wordy constructions, and boilerplate language. Edit ruthlessly.
- Avoid an approach in which each campus unit describes itself and the results are edited and patched together into a report. This is the easiest to do and the least effective as a self-study or as a report.
- On the other hand, avoid an approach in which one or a few individuals write up a description of the institution from a largely global perspective. It is difficult to write a good Self-Study Report without a good self-study effort.
- Avoid collecting only new *(ad hoc)* data. Use all available sources such as from assessment, program reviews, accreditation reports, annual reports, and state higher education reports. Results from every output measure you have should be considered for what it says about the institution. The basis for every Self-Study Report should be data about all parts of the institution from a variety of routine and special sources. Nothing can substitute for candid analysis of the available data on outcomes and effectiveness, analysis by campus leaders, by the members of the self-study committee, and by the constituencies.
- Don't overlook including a campus map and an organization chart(s) as appendices so the team members will have them immediately available.
- Avoid pages of unbroken text. Readability is improved by breaking up the text, lessening gray areas, occasional uses of double columns, scanned photos, and so forth.
- Use available resources such as campus annual reports, accreditation self-studies, and especially, team reports.

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Preparation of a Self-Study Report: "~~time consuming and tedious~~ exacting"

April Beavers
Dolores Kiesler

Having recently completed our North Central Self-Study, we—the Coordinator and editor—felt that we were in a unique position to assist others who are in the midst of their own data collection and writing process. As we look back now, the process may not seem quite as arduous as it felt at the time, but we still remember that the tasks involved in the self-study often seemed endless and even incomprehensible at times. Our goal in this session is twofold: (1) to focus initially on the philosophical differences between an evaluative and a descriptive Self-Study Report, and (2) to share some ideas and hints about gathering the data and writing the report so that all involved in the college community feel that their ideas have been heard and incorporated in the final report.

The Concord College self-study process began in Spring 1995 and culminated with the team visit in October 1997. The self-study, as it will with many of your institutions, brought people together and ended up strengthening the institution as a whole in spite of the initial tensions among various constituent groups. As academic budgets tighten and there are fewer dollars available for faculty, equipment, etc., we often find tensions on campuses building, morale sagging, and tempers short. So it was at Concord College in the two to three years prior to our scheduled accreditation review. The Coordinator's goal was to find a middle ground and present views that would be agreed upon by multiple groups. In a way, the Coordinator's role was as a synchronizer and an equalizer.

One of the first tasks after forming the Steering Committee was to come to an understanding of what was being asked for in the self-study. As data were gathered from the various offices and departments, it became obvious that attention needed to focus on whether we were writing a report that described the College and its purposes and programs or one that evaluated it.

Conducting an Evaluative Study

Initial and final drafts from six subcommittees were presented to the Steering Committee for input. It was at this point that shaping the study for an evaluative approach rather than a descriptive one was constructed. If you think in terms of the differences between "descriptive" and "evaluative," several terms come to mind. For example, descriptive approaches trigger the idea of case studies, narratives, and suggestive data. Evaluative approaches bring to mind statistical data, factual information, and formative reports.

Some examples of descriptive approaches in the Concord report were in detailing the process and modifications used in re-examining the mission statement and in summarizing the strategic plan and process. Examples of evaluative inclusions were an analysis of grievances over the past several years according to issues, level of decision, and decision outcomes; outlining and analyzing Faculty Senate responses to issues by date discussed and decision made; faculty professional activities by year with the number of faculty publications, research, service activities, etc. Most data points were for the ten-year period since the last review, but in a few cases only four to five years were included.

The second major task was not only to find a way of gathering the data so that all stakeholders had input but also to incorporate the often inconsistent and even conflicting information that would reflect the truth of our situation. In the end we ideally wanted the self-study to be a report that the entire College community could own.

Practical Tips for Writing the Report

While serving as the editor of the North Central Self-Study Report may sound isolating and dry, in reality it might be described as acting as a referee or mediator. Certainly the primary task of the editor is to give one voice to the total report, but implicit in that is the need to reconcile conflicting opinions and even, at times, conflicting "facts." As editor, it was important to keep several objectives in mind:

- to write a report that would secure continued accreditation for the school
- to highlight the strengths of Concord College
- to acknowledge the weaknesses of the College
- to develop responses/plans for continuing improvement
- to involve as many people as possible in the process
- to have the Self-Study flow as though one voice were speaking
- to do all of this with integrity and openness

The first of these elements may be the most important in many ways and yet, without the other five, the report would not reflect the true situation and experience at the College, nor would it be accepted as a valid view by others on campus.

It was important to keep reminding, often in subtle ways, those who were critiquing sections of the report that, while we needed to point out areas of weakness, we also wanted continued accreditation and, therefore, wanted to highlight what we do well. The time of an accreditation visit allows every department, office, and organization the chance to air grievances and request or demand changes; these are certainly vital to the report, but often the people involved need to be reminded that the programs or services they offer or receive also have strengths.

While most areas were readily able to list weaknesses, the strengths seemed more difficult to name initially. Possibly as an academic community, we expect excellence and begin to consider areas of achievement as the norm. As editor and Coordinator, we found that we needed to brainstorm personally about the strengths of certain areas and then send the drafts back with a list of suggested additions which highlighted the strengths of that particular discipline or area of service.

Negotiating Agreements Among Stakeholders

With so many people contributing, a huge task for the editor was to rewrite in such a way that the uniqueness of the individual areas was not hidden and yet the College, through the report, would be speaking with one voice. Information was submitted by those who had excellent communication skills as well as by those who struggled to express their ideas clearly. In the first instance, usually only formatting and general appearance needed to be altered in order for the drafts to be included in the final report; in the second example, often the editor needed to contact individuals asking for oral explanations in order to rewrite the sections. In these cases, as well as in any areas where major revisions were completed, the revised drafts or appropriate sections were returned to the initial group for further review and comment. This enabled the group to know that their comments were desired and that an effort was being made to incorporate their ideas.

Meetings with individuals one-on-one were also necessary in an effort to resolve conflicting ideas. Since many members of the College community had the opportunity to read all of the drafts of the document and submit comments, there was frequent disagreement about not only wording but also the content. In these instances the editor would rewrite and meet with both "sides" individually, asking for oral feedback and rewriting in their presence. This often gave the individuals who saw conflict the chance to air personal grievances, suggest wording changes, and eventually come to own that section of the report, even if they were not in complete agreement with the ideas.

While the actual writing of the Self-Study Report was certainly not the most important aspect of the self-study process, an acceptance of the final report as a document that accurately and honestly reflected the experience at Concord College by as many of the constituents as possible was a necessary goal in our minds. The entire process brought the College community together, and the involvement, both through committees and personal contact, of as many people as possible enabled that to happen.

Practical Issues for Organizing

On the surface, the decision about the organization of the report seems minor, but in actuality it governs how you proceed as well as how you might organize and involve others. Variations in strategies need to be matched to the personality of the leader. For example, Coordinators with strong writing skills may not want to work with an editor. They may gather data from different sources on campus, compile the narrative supported by data, and submit it to the Steering Committee for review before finalizing the report. An individual with strong people skills may involve numerous individuals from all segments of campus to contribute to the data collection, review, and write while gaining consensus among different factions.

For our campus, the decision to organize by Criteria was made rather quickly, and working subcommittees were set up to report to the Steering Committee. Senior administrators and the Faculty President on the Steering Committee were assigned a section of the self-study as their responsibility, and each chaired a committee that included a cross-section of the College community. Serving on each committee were presidents and representatives of various constituent groups: faculty, staff, students, and the community. Because of the diversity of information and the quantity of material, Criterion Two, which deals with resources, was divided into two groups and hence two subcommittees, but not two distinct chapters in the report.

◇ **Organizing the files and index.** Organizing the report by criteria allowed for doing the same with the files. In our case, an index to the files was provided to the Evaluation Team. While lengthy, it was comprehensive and demonstrated to others that an effort had been made to be thorough in scope. Thus, bankers' boxes were organized and placed on tables. With this approach the user had everything at waist level and did not have to stoop or stretch to access the information.

Do not assume that others will automatically see your order. Our goal was to make the files as functional and as self-explanatory as possible so that there was a logical order to the documentation. A veteran Consultant-Evaluator recommended that the specific file names and numbers be provided within the Self-Study Report.

◇ **Informing others of the self-study results.** As final versions of different chapters were completed, selected Steering Committee members made copies available to others for their review and input. A special issue of the faculty-staff newsletter was published and disseminated about a week prior to the visit to inform everyone of major findings reported to the Team. Copies were also mailed to the Steering Committee members and the Board of Advisors. Articles of interest were developed from the Report and submitted to the student newspaper editor. In this manner, all were informed of the major outcomes and had opportunity for review and comment. Following receipt of the North Central Commission action letter, news releases and additional publications were sent to the area media, alumni, and students, faculty, and staff groups.

◇ **Report closure and campus unity.** A major strategy for the report closure resulted in pulling constituency groups together. A nominal group process was used to identify what respective representatives of administrators, faculty, and staff thought were the major college strengths and weaknesses. Student exit interviews were used to extrapolate these findings for the student population. At a major faculty and staff convocation prior to finalizing the report, groups were brought together and asked to generate solutions to the major identified weaknesses. Representatives of various constituencies were assigned to small groups with faculty and staff facilitators; two identified weaknesses were assigned to two or three different groups. Participants received a full compilation listing of identified strengths and weaknesses as they finished, and the generated solutions were edited and distributed for review. Thus, shortly before the campus evaluation visit, almost all employees had an opportunity to say how major problems could be solved. They also had multiple opportunities to learn about outcomes of the self-study process.

Conclusion

Often, however, even the best-laid plans can go awry, and that also needs to be expected and accepted. In the most memorable instance from our self-study, the President requested a wording change in the final paragraph of the

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document as the final draft was being prepared. The original sentence began "While this Self-Study process has been time-consuming and tedious...": the President struck out "time-consuming and tedious" and replaced it with "exacting." Even though the editor and Coordinator preferred the initial wording as an accurate reflection of their experience, the change was submitted to the typist, and the copy was taken to the printer. Only after the final copies were printed did we notice that the change had never been made! And so we, too,—the editor and Coordinator—had our input.

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When the Self-Study Report Is Complete: A Logical Approach to the Team Resource Room Using the Quick Referencing Form

Carol Swain Lewis

An Overview: Self-Study at TRCC

The self-study process at Three Rivers Community College (TRCC) began in January of 1995 with the naming of the Self-Study Coordinator, and the comprehensive evaluation visit occurred in October of 1997. During those 33 months, the Steering Committee, the Coordinator, and the vice-president/dean of academic affairs labored to produce a self-study that would serve the purpose of gaining continued accreditation for Three Rivers, and ensuring that the college would continue to grow stronger while remaining a vital component of the Southeast Missouri area it serves.

From its inception, the Steering Committee set the goal to involve the entire college population, making certain at each juncture that subcommittee meetings, campus-wide gatherings, and smaller, focused group meetings pertaining to the self-study process were scheduled at various times in a variety of locations on campus. Each of the twelve Steering Committee members served as chair or co-chair of nine subcommittees that were correlated to the General Institutional Requirements and the five Criteria. Faculty and staff chose committee assignments, and certain administrative personnel were designated as resource persons because of their proximity to and familiarity with certain areas of the college.

Throughout the process of gathering information, identifying strengths and concerns, and correlating findings, each subcommittee chair kept careful records of sources and their locations and provided the information to the Self-Study Coordinator. As the Coordinator compiled and wrote each section and chapter of the first draft, all documents, including copies of information gathered in its original form, material drafted by subcommittee chairs, and working drafts of the Self-Study Report were kept in files and updated as appropriate.

As drafts were completed, subcommittee chairs circulated copies of individual chapters to members, and the Steering Committee met to consider and approve final drafts as they were submitted to the vice-president/dean of academic affairs beginning in the fall of 1996.

Organization was a key in helping to prevent duplication of effort, and to all intents and purposes, organization was the overriding factor in the ultimate success of Three Rivers Community College's self-study process.

However, in the midst of the tremendous relief of completing the actual self-study document can come the gut-wrenching realization that the project is in many ways only beginning. Being prepared and being organized are the Steering Committee's resource room "Alka-Seltzer," and a working outline underscores the fact that it is never too early in the self-study process to begin to think of the resource room.

Developing a Working Outline

As the best of writers know, organization must be considered, and the very nature of a self-study document with many people involved in the writing process makes this especially important. A preliminary outline for the Three Rivers self-study was developed before the first Steering Committee meeting, and this outline served as the means by which committees were organized. This initial outline served the college well and provided a "North Star" toward which each subcommittee and the Coordinator steered.

However, as drafting began, it became obvious that the document was flowing slightly differently than had been anticipated, and the working outline underwent minor revisions. As the Steering Committee achieved more sophisticated levels of understanding of the self-study process and of various aspects of the workings of the institution, the document moved toward becoming a reflection of this understanding.

For example, TRCC's initial outline delegated to one subcommittee every aspect of the college's student services. Campus activities and organizations for students are a very important way in which the college meets students' needs, and the subcommittee began gathering information. However, the subcommittee working on governance and administration quickly realized that it was duplicating efforts. The Coordinator revised the outline to reflect student participation in governance without needless repetition of information in another chapter. Subcommittees shared information, duplication of effort was for the most part avoided, and the self-study document benefited.

In this manner, then, an organized Steering Committee can use the outline much to the advantage of the self-study document, of the institution, and especially of the people involved. What easily could have become a disorganized situation instead provided for better understanding. And months later, this increased understanding would become crucial as the resource room was synthesized.

We Are Good, But We Cannot Read Minds

For the newcomer to the self-study process, it is relatively easy to have an oversimplified perception of the task at hand: all that the Steering Committee must do is to gather information about the college, to organize it according to guidelines that respond to certain criteria and requirements, then to give everything to the Coordinator who will make stylistic decisions and put everything in one voice. It really does sound easy. However, from the perspective of an institution that has *successfully* completed the self-study process, the view is different.

The best attempts at organizing the self-study, while extremely beneficial, rarely provide ready solutions to every situation that can arise. From the viewpoint of the Coordinator, though, most of the process will be less appalling if the careful keeping of documentation described earlier is observed faithfully.

It is imperative that each Steering Committee member share a common institutional vision, and each subcommittee member must understand to what he or she is contributing. In the realm of the self-study, without a clear picture of the whole, the parts will not function. Initially, the Coordinator must catch this vision and present it to the Steering Committee. Still, it can be shocking to "hear" the variety of voices and styles in which material is presented.

Early on, it is absolutely necessary for the Coordinator to keep track of what comes from whom and where that information can be found. The nature of the self-study document does not allow for the inclusion of every piece of information, and many of those pieces of the self-study puzzle that will not be in the final draft provide important documentation and present patterns that must be identified and given consideration.

For example, an institution's budget is without doubt important documentation and certainly presents patterns that are significant. However, there is no place in a self-study document for an entire budget. Instead, crucial information that provides evidence of certain fiscal patterns must be included. A Consultant-Evaluator with a budgetary question easily can be directed to a well-organized resource room, and any information that he or she might need will result in a more focused and better informed inquiry to the office of the dean of financial affairs.

The entire process, then, is simply one of keeping track of information and preparing to provide a map of sorts to the Evaluation Team. As the self-study progresses and files begin to take shape, it is an excellent idea to keep a simple list in each file that correlates information and sources. These lists provide an informational safety net to Steering Committee members and the Coordinator, and the impossible and confusing task of attempting to read minds does not enter the process.

Patterns of Evidence

Guidelines provided by the North Central Association for preparing a self-study document are invaluable, and of particular value are the Patterns of Evidence. These models can serve as the ultimate self-study road map through the twisting and sometimes treacherous months of preparation. As each subcommittee tackles its particular area, keeping the appropriate patterns of evidence in mind can cast light into even the more obscure points of understanding.

These "indicators," as the Commission labels them in the *Handbook of Accreditation, 1994-96*, become indicative of a well-organized self-study, and further, they can provide Steering Committee members and the Self-Study Coordinator with the perfect organizational tool.

As the working outline develops and as information reaches the Steering Committee, the Coordinator will find tremendous benefit in a locally-adapted list of patterns of evidence for each section and chapter of the self-study document. While it is less difficult for an institution, regardless of size, to ascertain patterns of evidence for having "clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission" (Criterion One), the waters can be less clear when establishing patterns that indicate that "the institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes" (Criterion Three).

Using the Commission's *Handbook of Accreditation* as a guide, each Steering Committee member can establish a working list of the institution's patterns of evidence and use it throughout the process. As the Coordinator checks and double-checks information, these local patterns become an invaluable tool in the organization of the self-study document.

However, patterns of evidence should not be taken for "a complete formula or recipe for conducting a self-study process," according to the *Handbook*. The self-study document "should summarize broadly the resources and variety of evidence examined, the means and criteria used to evaluate it, and the conclusions drawn from it." It is a summary document and "need not present all the evidence the institution has collected." Local patterns of evidence, then, combine with a working outline and a complete list of information and sources to contribute to a positive self-study process and, ultimately, to an organized resource room.

TRCC's Quick Referencing Form

What, exactly, does the Steering Committee do with 33 months' worth of collected evidence? After the self-study document and appendices are in the mail, there is the daunting task of organizing the resource room without relocating every piece of paper and every computer disk on campus. It is at this point that the organizational methods described become invaluable, and a simple Quick Referencing Form aids in the accessibility of information.

After the final draft is approved, each Steering Committee member and the Coordinator must read through the document, checking to make certain that every item mentioned and every item referenced is on a master list for the chapter where it is found. Committee members check chapter by chapter, noting sources that have multiple references within the document. Files will be established for each resource, and those resources that cannot easily be placed within a file cabinet are noted.

Lists of labels necessary for file folders for each chapter's resources are compiled and numbered accordingly: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and so on. When this process is complete, referencing sheets, or Quick Referencing Forms based on where information is located, are established.

For instance, an introductory chapter might contain demographic information in an assessment of the college environment. In an overview of enrollment trends for the 10-year period since the last self-study, a table charting full-time enrollment equivalents appears. Information contained in this table was gathered from copies of the registrar's reports. These reports are referenced not only in the introductory chapter but at several different locations in the self-study document. To avoid duplicating the reports at various locations in the files, they are included in the file cabinet under the chapter where they are first mentioned. The folder label for this item, then, would look something like this:

1.3 Registrar's Reports to the President, 1987-1997

The registrar's reports are placed in that folder. The chapter in which they are next referenced, Chapter Six, would contain a file with the following label:

6.5 Registrar's Reports to the President, 1987 - 1997

Inside this folder would be a sheet of paper that reads as follows:

The Registrar's Reports to the President are located in folder 1.3.

When material referenced is from a resource such as a large book that cannot be placed in a file cabinet, the file label and the sheet in the file folder might read like this:

12.2 TRCC 2000

Copies of TRCC 2000: The Next Decade are located on the shelves in the NCA Resource Room.

A Quick Referencing Form is prepared for each chapter, and each form lists reference material used in that chapter and where it can be located. Information that can be brought to the resource room is readily accessible, and information that cannot be placed in the resource room easily can be located. Duplication is avoided, and Evaluation Team members armed with Quick Referencing Forms for each chapter can find their way with comparative ease.

Each chapter in the self-study document has its own section in a file cabinet, and the first file folder in each chapter section contains a copy of its Quick Referencing Form. The Evaluation Team is given copies of the Quick Referencing Forms for each chapter upon arrival, so in a manner of speaking, they have access to the resource room prior to their actual arrival on campus.

Conclusion

Organization is the key to a successful self-study process: a good working outline prevents duplication of efforts and provides structural guidance; keeping chapter-by-chapter lists of information and where it can be found ensures that chaos will not reign; and establishing local patterns of evidence helps to keep the entire process on-track. However, the best organization is no better than those who participate in its structure, and Three Rivers Community College possesses a veritable wealth of human resources.

During the self-study process, everyone on campus participated to some extent. Faculty and staff spent hours of valuable time in addition to their normal duties researching, compiling, writing, and meeting. Extensive campus involvement placed tremendous burdens on many, and without this dedication, the self-study could not have been completed. No one person is more or less responsible; rather, the successful whole is merely a synthesis of many dedicated parts.

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Chapter 13

NCA

Coordinating Special Types of Evaluations

THE Collaborative Imperative

103rd Annual Meeting of the North Central Association
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
March 28-31, 1998 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

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The Road to Accreditation Is Paved with Good Intentions, But It Doesn't Get the Job Done

Phillip O. Barry
Natalie Gillard

History

Mesa Technical College is located in rural northeastern New Mexico, where the mesas are as wide-ranging as the cattle. The College had its beginning in January 1979 as part of the Tucumcari's school district, providing vocational training, and later becoming Tucumcari Area Vocational School with its own Board. As the institution grew so did the quality issue with calls for accreditation beginning to surface in the community. The resonance of that sound began to be heard in the Board Room of the school. Three failed attempts at the accreditation process resulted in a new Board and new leadership committed to establishing institutional integrity and quality that would result in the seal of accreditation. With a new name, mission, and leadership, Mesa Technical College began a new process intent on gaining accreditation. The College, however, needed to address several state concerns, namely, the College budget, the suspension of a 25-year lease with a federal agency to run a recreational park, and the infraction of state law with regard to purchased college property.

Needless to say, the College needed to put its affairs in order and become accredited before it embarked on additional projects. Having identified the concerns of the executive, legislative, and agency branches of the New Mexico government, the College was ready to address the most basic element of an institution of higher education, its accreditation, which was also a major concern of the State with regard to the College's survivability.

The staff of Mesa needed simultaneously to stabilize the College, develop a college environment, and implement a strategic planning process in order to begin the accreditation process. Figure 1 shows the fundamentals that needed to be in place before the accreditation process could commence.

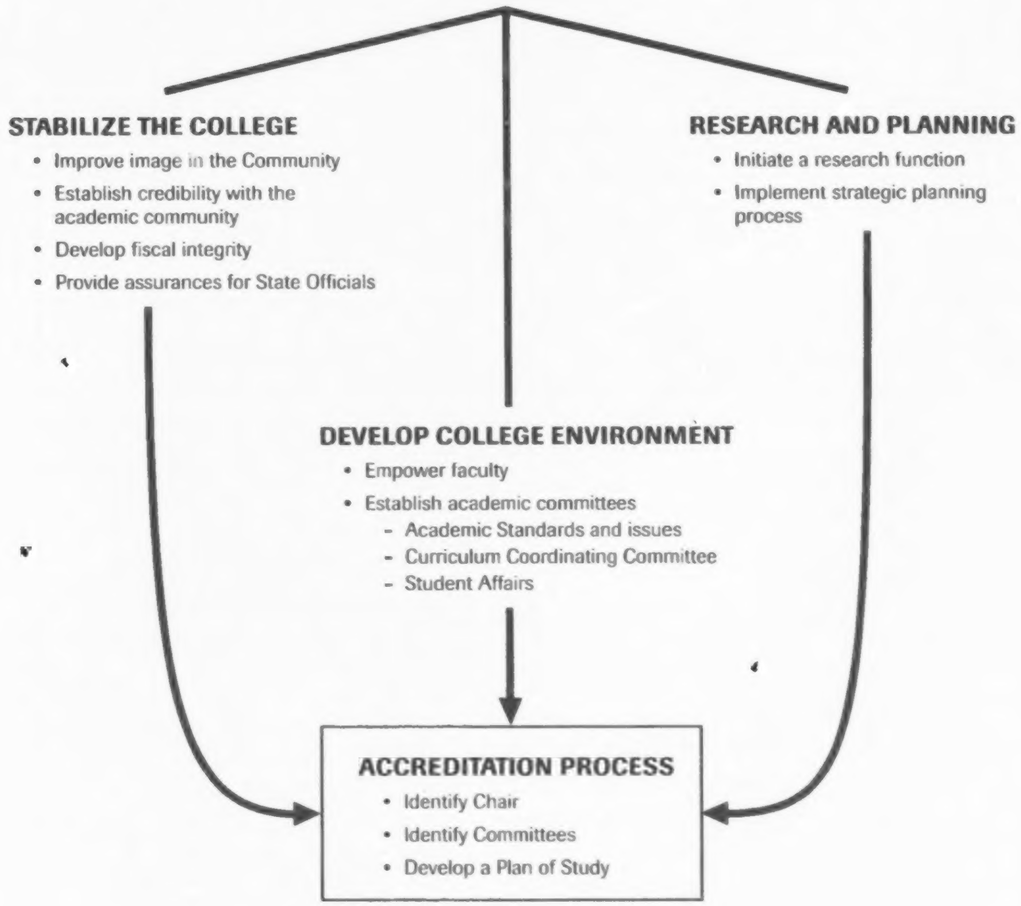
Contrary to its bleak accreditation history, the College had served the community well over the years by providing vocational training. As the country changed and greater accountability measures emerged, the accreditation of the institution (now as a college) became paramount for State officials, the Board of Trustees, the community and, most importantly, its students.

Elements for Success

The new leadership for the College was aware of the institution's history, but realized that many elements for a successful college were in place and only needed to be organized and presented in a realistic fashion. These elements included the Board of Trustees, the faculty, the community, the employees, the Commission on Higher Education, and the facilities/resources, which are discussed below.

- **Board of Trustees.** The Board was committed to getting the College accredited, thus enabling the College to join the higher education community of the State of New Mexico. The Board provided the financial support, leadership, and latitude for the administration to move quickly and decisively in regaining the College's stability and integrity.

Fundamentals Needed Prior to the Accreditation Process



STABILIZE THE COLLEGE
- Improve image in the Community
- Establish credibility with the academic community
- Develop fiscal integrity
- Provide assurances for State Officials

RESEARCH AND PLANNING
- Initiate a research function
- Implement strategic planning process

DEVELOP COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT
- Empower faculty
- Establish academic committees
  - Academic Standards and issues
  - Curriculum Coordinating Committee
  - Student Affairs

ACCREDITATION PROCESS
- Identify Chair
- Identify Committees
- Develop a Plan of Study

◇ **Faculty.** The faculty provided the academic assurances needed for the accreditation process. The faculty realized that the accreditation process would assure acceptance of their credibility as higher education faculty and provide the seal of approval for the course work they provided. Having the faculty committed to the accreditation process was the most critical element needed for the College's success.

◇ **Community.** As a small rural town, the community was aware of the College's contributions to its economic development and future. The College had a significant impact on the training and preparation of many of the citizens for the workforce. The community was committed to moving the College forward and assuring its continuance for the future of the town.

◇ **Employees.** The College was fortunate to have a staff that committed itself to the accreditation process early on. The employees who had always been dedicated to the College realized that major changes were necessary, and they were willing to extend themselves to assure the success of their own College.

◇ **Commission on Higher Education.** The State's Commission that oversees all the colleges provided the guidance needed to change the College's course. The Commission's commitment to enhancing the College, as well as its continued encouragement and support of the accreditation process, provided the foundation for the College's success. The Commissioners themselves, as well as staff, realized the importance of the College to rural New Mexico, but insisted on quality measures that could be used in the accreditation process.

◇ **Facilities/resources.** The previous administrations and Boards of Trustees had provided the College with excellent facilities, teaching equipment, and academic resources, including library materials and computers. In addition to the physical resources, the College had assembled a core of qualified faculty, not only credentialed but also committed to the quality process of accreditation.

With these key elements for success in place, the College actually had a promising future if all of these elements could be engaged in a constructive effort to obtain accreditation. The accreditation had been within the reach of the College in the past, but for one reason or another, never came to fruition. At this point, the College was under pressure, to many for the last time, to prove its quality and defend its continuation.

The credibility of the College was critical to its students, as well as to the faculty and staff, the community, State officials, and other institutions of higher education.

Raising the Institution to Quality Standards of Accreditation

The accreditation of a college is more than meeting quality expectations of NCA and walking away. The benchmarks of 24 General Institutional Requirements and five Criteria for Accreditation are just that–benchmarks that must be at least met. Quality institutions must not only meet these measures but sustain them and strive for *continuous improvement.*

A mistake that many colleges make in determining to seek accreditation is failing to understand that accreditation doesn't end when the team leaves, but is an ongoing process. The Board of Trustees, the administration, the faculty, and the staff must continually keep the quality expectations of accreditation on the forefront of planning and daily operations.

Accreditation for non-accredited colleges, in most cases, will involve significant *institutional change,* which requires the colleges to embrace and understand the change process. This process by itself can become the needed catalyst to initiate new institutional expectations of its staff and students. A strategic planning process with total college involvement can ease this important transition.

New *expectations* based on institutional change will and must occur. The new expectations can come in many forms from many places, such as state agencies, the legislature, the community, the accreditation agencies, or students themselves. Or in many cases, at Mesa, they can come all at once. The expectations of institutional performance translate to quality benchmarks (emerging patterns of evidence), which, in turn, allow the accreditation criteria to be met. Therefore, it is important that the institution's change allows for new expectations rather than changing the institution to meet only the accreditation criteria; if not, the change would be superficial with no foundation for continuation.

With new expectations in place, the institution must realize that *continuity of performance* (pattern of evidence) will be required to assure continued quality, and as a result, lead to accreditation. We believe that this is a very difficult task to communicate to the staff. In small colleges the staff must be ever mindful of the effect day-to-day operations have on the institutional performance in that minor changes in any area can, and in most instances, will significantly affect the continuity of another area and impinge on academic integrity.

In addition to continuity there must be consistency in the implementation of a new mission, goals, policies, and regulations. This *consistency of performance* (patterns of evidence) will continue to assure the accreditation of an institution.

Strategic Planning Process

> "We can't control the future, but if we can recognize its dominant trends, then we can make choices that will help create the future we prefer."
>
> Stephen Millett

We believe that the linchpin to the accreditation process begins with the strategic planning process.

Strategic planning became critically important to Mesa Technical College because of its limited two-year curriculum. The single most important tool for decision making in this time of competition for limited state resources and demands for greater accountability is responsive strategic planning. Such planning demands multiple assessment instruments and multiple inputs.

This strategic planning process is intended to be ongoing and continuously updated. The world, the United States, New Mexico, and the College are experiencing the impact of the change from what William J. Banach and Albert L. Lorenzo have so aptly described as the "move from a period of rapid change to one of radical change."

Environmental factors may change rapidly, so the strategic planning process is designed to assure that the College maintains currency of the plan to present what the College community considers the most likely scenario it can expect in the next five years. While there is no guarantee that the future strategic impact on the College can be ascertained in the penultimate years of the plan, the basic conclusions derived from the environmental scan should help the College be ready to adjust to any changes that will affect the decision-making process.

Through a systematic approach to decision-making, augmented with valid research data, the College will be able to take into account not only the environment but also availability of resources–financial, human, and physical–which will enable the College to serve the citizens better and match more closely the collective vision of the College community.

Throughout the entire process, activities will be structured to provide employees, students, and the governing board (which represents the public) with opportunities for input. Face-validity exercises will be used to identify strengths/challenges and strategic options that best help the College mission.

The process of strategic planning at Mesa Technical College is being addressed in two phases: Phase 1 is preparatory and will include development of the environmental scan, which will include both external and internal data collection and assessment; Phase 2 will involve execution of the plan, including environmental assumptions and institutional implications, strategic priorities, goals, and objectives. The flowchart in Figure 2 diagrams the strategic planning process.

The strategic planning process at Mesa Technical College is an interactive and participatory process. Befitting its size and stage of development, the process involves all of the governing board, administration, and faculty, with representatives of the staff and students. Because of the size of the College, the process is being conducted through the office of the President with three primary committees: Mission Review Committee, Research Committee, and Strategic Planning Committee. Augmenting the strategic planning process will be work done by the Self-Study Steering Committee for Accreditation (with its five criterion subcommittees), the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, and the Educational Outcomes/Assessment Committee. These will assist in concurrently addressing institutional presence.

Mission Review Committee

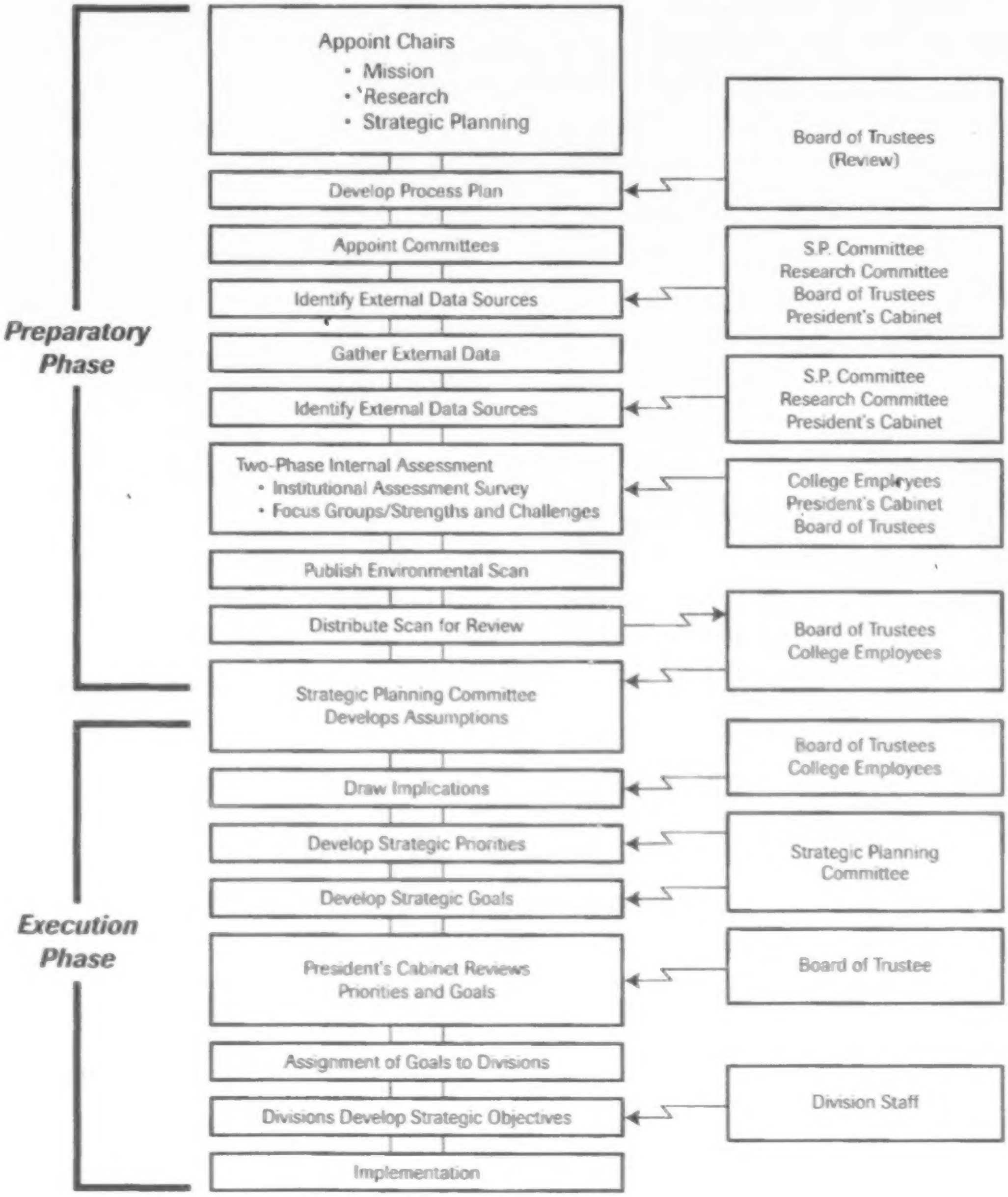
The Mission Review Committee consists of a senior administrator, two faculty members, one board member, and one professional staff representative. The mission statement is periodically reviewed by the faculty, administration, and governing board. In support of the strategic planning process, a Mission Review Committee will review and determine if the College mission is appropriate, current, and stated in terms that can be measured to determine effectiveness. The committee will draft revisions, if needed, for further actions. The updated mission statement and accompanying institutional goals are included in the environmental scan.

Research Committee

The Research Committee consists of the senior administrator, the librarian, the Small Business Development Center staff, and the institutional computer consultant. The Research Committee was organized to facilitate the strategic planning process by identifying pertinent internal and external data from general topic areas, assessing internal aspects of the College, and leading in the development of an environmental scan. External data are being identified and gathered from the environment, including economic, political, social, technological, and demographic developments. The organization of the scan into five major sections indicates the various areas where it was considered that analysis of data could help in drawing inferences that would guide the College in strategic decision-making processes at all levels. The environmental scan will be used extensively throughout the strategic planning process and currency maintained on an ongoing basis to provide *current* information and data for College-wide decision making.

In addition, an Institutional Assessment Survey will be used to assess the College's operations and services. This survey will be distributed to all employees to provide information regarding the effectiveness of College operations and areas needing improvement.

Through the organization of focus groups, College employees and the governing board participate in identifying the College's strengths and challenges for use in the development of the strategic plan. A nominal group technique will be used to identify and prioritize strengths and challenges for the College. The institutional assessment data obtained in the strategic planning process will also be utilized to augment and document assessment of institutional effectiveness in the accreditation process for the North Central Association.


Preparatory Phase
Execution Phase
Appoint Chairs
• Mission
• Research
• Strategic Planning
Board of Trustees (Review)
Develop Process Plan
Appoint Committees
S.P. Committee
Research Committee
Board of Trustees
President's Cabinet
Identify External Data Sources
Gather External Data
S.P. Committee
Research Committee
President's Cabinet
Identify External Data Sources
Two-Phase Internal Assessment
• Institutional Assessment Survey
• Focus Groups/Strengths and Challenges
College Employees
President's Cabinet
Board of Trustees
Publish Environmental Scan
Distribute Scan for Review
Board of Trustees
College Employees
Strategic Planning Committee Develops Assumptions
Board of Trustees
College Employees
Draw Implications
Develop Strategic Priorities
Strategic Planning Committee
Develop Strategic Goals
President's Cabinet Reviews Priorities and Goals
Board of Trustee
Assignment of Goals to Divisions
Divisions Develop Strategic Objectives
Division Staff
Implementation

Mesa Technical College
Strategic Planning Process Model

Strategic Planning Committee

The Strategic Planning Committee has been established to develop the process, oversee its implementation, and assess its effectiveness for institutional fit. The Strategic Planning Committee will develop the environmental scan and analyze the information to formalize assumptions based upon the data. From the assumptions, College employees and the governing board will be provided opportunities for input into the determination of implications based on identified assumptions. This committee will develop a strategic plan that will serve as a guide and move the institution into the future through a process that strategically fits the College's environment and resources to its current and future program offerings, services, and operations within a changing environment. This process will not only identify new initiatives, but will also identify and address areas within the College that need to be implemented, improved, or changed.

The Strategic Planning Committee will develop strategic priorities and goals for the College for the next five years. Of the priorities identified during this process, the committee will determine which priorities will be addressed first. Strategic goals will be developed to address strategic priorities, and strategic objectives will be developed to implement the plan. Remaining priorities will be addressed in future years.

The strategic plan is being developed into a formalized process. However, it is important to note that, as a planning document, the strategic plan will remain flexible and fluid to allow the College to adapt readily to environmental factors that may cause necessary and desirable change. The President's Cabinet will monitor progress in the accomplishment of strategic objectives. Evaluation of the strategic plan will be conducted annually and reviewed by the governing board.

Data-Driven Decision Making

With the strategic plan in place to guide the College into the future, the college focused its attention on data collection. In order to make valid decisions about the future, the College would rely heavily on data gathered from a series of survey instruments. This data would be used to make what we termed "data-driven decision making." We no longer would make decisions based on instinct, but rather on substantiated information. This also provided the necessary information to address the accreditation process in a quantifiable way. The array of surveys that are administered on a regular schedule include Institutional Assessment Survey, Student Opinion Survey, Entering Student Opinion Survey, High School Student Interest Survey (Academic Program Assessment Survey), Non-Returning/Withdrawing Survey, Alumni Survey, and several Community Interest Surveys to determine need.

Institutional Effectiveness Plan

The data-driven decision making model and the data sources allowed for the measurement of overall institutional effectiveness. A plan was developed that showed the relationship of institutional mission, goals, thirteen core indicators of effectiveness, and strategic priorities. This was the first time the College showed how all the elements of effectiveness were united to demonstrate measurable (quantifiable) outcomes for the self-study.

Accreditation Process

> "Don't be afraid to take a big step if one is indicated. You can't cross a chasm in two small jumps."
>
> David Lloyd George (Prime Minister of Great Britain)

In August 1996, the accreditation process became a reality for the staff with the identification of the chair for the Self-Study Steering Committee. Because of the critical nature of the accreditation process, it was determined that the chair must have strong faculty support, as well as leadership abilities. Faculty support is a prerequisite to the accreditation process because the process must be faculty-driven. After careful consideration a faculty member was appointed to serve as the chair of the Self-Study Steering Committee.

Subsequent to the appointment of the Self-Study Steering Committee Chair, the next order of business was to identify Self-Study Steering Committee members. The selection of the committee members was as crucial as the selection of the chair. In addition to having faculty support, the committee members needed to be strong and vocal leaders and possess critical thinking skills. Nine individuals were selected to serve on the Self-Study Steering Committee, consisting of faculty, staff, and administration. A majority of the members of the committee were faculty, with a representation of fifty-six percent.

Following the appointment of the Self-Study Steering Committee, the five criteria committees were also established. Armed with *good intentions*, appropriate committees, and commitment, the faculty, staff, and administration were ready to hit the *road to accreditation* at a high speed.

The self-study process cannot be done in isolation; therefore, equal input and equal opportunities were provided to all the staff. Throughout the process, open communication served as the cornerstone of success in the accreditation process. To ensure open communication all committee meetings were open to the staff and community; committee minutes were posted throughout the campus in order to keep the College community apprised of the work and progress of the various committees.

Over a four-month period, an intense and exhaustive process occurred, with the short-term goal of attaining NCA Candidacy as the motivation needed to ensure quality and consistency of performance. All of the committees played an important role in the accreditation process.

The criteria committees were assigned the task of preparing reports that would be used to write the Self-Study Report. The Self-Study Steering Committee reviewed and approved the criteria reports as appropriate. Upon final approval of the reports, the Self-Study Report was prepared. A draft copy of the report was made available to all employees. The employees were given an ample amount of time to review the report and to suggest changes. With the approval of the Board of Trustees the Self-Study Report was submitted to NCA.

Conclusion

The accreditation process resulted in the emergence of a number of positive outcomes for the College. The positive outcomes enabled the College to position itself for the future, while motivating the internal constituents to become active participants in the accreditation process, which is a continuous process.

Phillip O. Barry is President of Mesa Technical College in Tucumcari, N.Mex.

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The Successful Focused Visit

Jan L. Stone
Jane Ann Nelson

Overview

The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) conducted its last comprehensive visit to Ottawa University in 1993-94. The Commission granted continued accreditation and scheduled the next comprehensive visit for 2003-04. However, it also scheduled a focused evaluation for 1996-97 on academic management and system-wide assessment in a multi-site institution. The success of the December 2, 1996, Commission-mandated focused evaluation is the subject of this paper, as is the institutional improvement realized by Ottawa University as a direct result of the challenges posed in the preparation for the visit.

In addition to its home campus established in 1865 in Ottawa, Kansas, Ottawa University maintains adult education sites in Kansas City, Phoenix, and Milwaukee, and several sites on the Pacific Rim. Three years of planning and implementation on the part of faculty, administration, and members of the Board of Trustees culminated in a unified response to the two concerns slated for focused evaluation. A summary of the results of Ottawa University's focused evaluation on academic management and system-wide assessment follows.

Outcomes of the Focused Visit

In its response to the first concern, academic management, Ottawa University presented an alternative model of academic administration to accommodate the diversity of its constituencies–traditional and adult students at multiple sites, both domestic and international. The President and Board of Trustees established the University Academic Council (UAC), with elected faculty representation from each site, as the academic decision-making body of the University. They also created a new position, Director of Academic Affairs, to chair the UAC, serve as academic liaison to the Board, and coordinate the self-study effort with the UAC as the Steering Committee. The NCA focused Evaluation Team, composed of three academic vice-presidents, validated Ottawa University's academic management model as "effective shared governance" and "strong ownership of the academic management process."

In its response to the second concern, Ottawa University expanded University-wide the campus assessment plan that had been reviewed by the previous comprehensive NCA team as "manifesting remarkable strength" in its development of cognitive and affective outcomes and departmental strategies to assess their achievement. Further, the UAC adopted an implementation plan incorporating "assessment teams" based on NCA's site visit model. Assessment teams, which include faculty from at least two University sites, a faculty member from another institution, and a member of the Ottawa University Board of Trustees, evaluate documentation of student academic achievement in each major every four years. Site provosts submit annual progress reports, and successive teams evaluate program improvement, University-wide and site-specific, against the recommendations of each earlier assessment team. The NCA focused Evaluation Team endorsed Ottawa University's assessment plan, and the fully implemented program continues to enhance the institution in its delivery of quality education to diverse constituencies.

Organization of the Process

Participation in a focused evaluation mentor group at the March 1996 NCA Annual Meeting proved helpful in Ottawa University's self-study process. It is intended that an overview of the process leading to Ottawa University's success will similarly benefit Self-Study Coordinators beginning to prepare for a focused visit as well as those in the latter stages. These elements include:

- analyzing the issues
- writing the self-study
- presenting the documentation
- improving University-wide communication
- focusing on institutional improvement through assessment

The first three elements are addressed below under Key Elements of the Process. The latter two elements will be described in greater detail.

Key Elements of the Process

The initial analysis of a Report of a Comprehensive Visit is critical to the organization of the self-study process. The two concerns slated for focused evaluation over a three-year period at Ottawa University were stated clearly. The UAC also analyzed the Advice and Recommendations section of the comprehensive report in light of the focused evaluation concerns, as well as any mention within the 80-page document of concerns that related to academic management or assessment. The UAC chose to demonstrate the effectiveness of Ottawa University's academic management model through actual resolution of a number of issues culled from the comprehensive report that were not specific to the focused evaluation.

Writing the self-study was the responsibility of the Director of Academic Affairs with the support of UAC members, key administrators, and faculty from each of the University's sites. The Director of Academic Affairs organized the report and developed assignments that by necessity became increasingly more explicit throughout the process. Thirty-one persons made contributions through writing or editing and are so acknowledged in the Focused Visit Report. The incorporation and editing of the work of so many contributors is a time-consuming process in itself. A lesson learned: Along with explicit writing assignments, it is helpful to include style guidelines–formal, third-person, objective!

Compilation and presentation of the documentation that supports the institution's resolution of concerns are not difficult tasks but require planning and, preferably, in-house expertise. An Ottawa University staff member was assigned on a part-time basis to compile all relevant documents ranging from minutes of academic decision-making groups, to surveys and their data analyses, to volumes detailing each of Ottawa's assessment projects. All documents were indexed to the Focused Visit Report, produced in a consistent and easily accessible format, and attractively displayed in the resource room. Because the report and its documentation are crucial in communicating an institution's responses to the NCA Evaluation Team, it is important that they be carefully written and presented.

Improving University-Wide Communication

Institutional interaction between Ottawa University's President, the Director of Academic Affairs, and NCA itself occurred throughout the process. Several forms of direct interaction were key to the success of the December 1996 focused evaluation: (1) ongoing communication with, and guidance from, the NCA staff liaison; (2) attendance at NCA Annual Meetings and Pre-Conference Workshops on Self-Study; (3) attendance at the NCA regional workshop on "Beginning and Refining the Assessment Plan"; and (4) understanding the focused evaluation process through study of the *Handbook of Accreditation* and review materials provided by NCA.

Opportunities for improving communication within the University community, however, had to be created. Indeed, the focused evaluation on academic management and assessment stemmed in large part from difficulties in communication among faculty and administrators within a multi-site institution. Representative governance by the UAC, which meets six times per year, has led to increased clarity in establishing consistency and communicating academic policy decisions to all sites. Furthermore, UAC members, as the self-study Steering Committee, ably used site faculty meetings to communicate progress over the three-year period leading to the focused evaluation. Ottawa University's assessment program, as described below, had in itself fostered a phenomenal increase in faculty communication within the academic disciplines.

In the final month before the focused evaluation, UAC members sensed the necessity of yet one more opportunity for faculty discussion of the two NCA concerns. Each site organized gatherings to review issues, progress, and any additional questions. The gatherings offered an opportunity to communicate University structures and goals to new faculty. In addition, they provided all faculty with the knowledge of the institution's progress and responses to NCA and engendered a renewed sense of commitment to academic excellence. The decision to schedule an open meeting between the entire faculty and the NCA Evaluation Team in December 1996 was a fortuitous one. To NCA team questions, faculty responded knowledgeably and positively, not merely because they understood, but also because they had been a part of and had bought into the process.

Focusing on Institutional Improvement Through Assessment

In May 1996, six months before the focused evaluation, the faculty from all adult centers traveled to Ottawa, Kansas, to meet with the campus faculty on the issue of assessment of student academic achievement. Two plenary sessions were devoted to "What We Have Learned from Assessment": (1) a panel from the liberal arts assessment team, and (2) a panel composed of representatives from each of the majors that had undergone assessment visits. An important element in the success of the focused evaluation was the fact that all of the majors that are offered at multiple sites had been subject to an assessment visit by the time of the December 1996 NCA team meeting.

Approximately 65% of University-wide faculty had directly participated in one of the assessment visits held to date—as team members, facilitators, or interviewees. The May 1996 meeting gave these faculty an opportunity to meet in their disciplines to review implementation plans for program improvements that had been developed by each site in response to recommendations by assessment teams. The remainder of the faculty met with the Director of Academic Affairs to discuss expectations for future assessment visits. This specifically focused meeting of faculty from the traditional home campus with the faculty of the adult centers fostered University-wide commitment to assessment of student academic achievement and its concomitant program improvement.

Over the course of the two-day meeting, faculty chose among elective sessions that included: portfolio development, reference research on the Internet, assessment of experiential learning, liberal arts studies across the curriculum, the adjunct faculty continuous improvement program, assessment in graduate programs, assessing the affective domain, the electronic classroom, assessment in the international program, and the role of survey data in assessment.

Conclusion

The program improvements resulting from assessment, coupled with faculty and administration communication on issues of importance to the institution's present and future, have changed Ottawa University. The experience of preparing for the NCA focused evaluation on academic management and assessment has engendered a commitment to the work that the UAC initiated, led, and brought to fruition. Ottawa University today is a stronger institution, stronger in academic management, in academic assessment, and in academic excellence.

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Jane Ann Nelson is Associate Dean of Arts and Humanities at Ottawa University in Ottawa, KS

Practical Advice for the Focused Visit Self-Study

Jeryl L. Nelson
Vaughn L. Benson
Robert O. McCue

Overview of the College

Wayne State College is a regional public college of 4,000 students, located in northeast Nebraska. It is part of a three-school state college system geographically positioned to serve rural Nebraska. The College's basic mission is twofold. First, it strives to develop students of a wide range of academic abilities through quality teaching and support. Second, it strives to assist with the development of its service region through the delivery of public service programs. The college is primarily an undergraduate institution offering a comprehensive curriculum with equal emphasis on the arts and sciences, business, and teacher education. The target audience for graduate programs is the part-time, older student who is employed full-time and is placebound by personal, family, and career responsibilities.

Focused Visit Purpose

This focused visit was in response to a 1992 accreditation visit that highlighted the following concern:

> The team was unable to evaluate the Master's in Business Administration degree program because of its newness and insufficient data to arrive at a decision concerning its quality. An NCA focused visit in five years will be required for this purpose.

The team visit to Wayne State College did not identify any specific weaknesses in the program, but rather was unable to make a determination as to its quality. The MBA program had been offering courses for just seven months and had just finished offering its first two courses when the team arrived.

Overview of the Paper

This paper will outline the process we used in preparation for our focused visit. The focused visit was held April 28-29, 1997. Work was begun on our self-study in February 1995. The self-study process undertook the following activities:

- identification of the Steering Committee
- clarification of the purpose of the focused visit
- developing an outline for the self-study process and document
- mechanisms to include a variety of constituencies in the process
- assessment information included in the self-study

Identification of the Steering Committee

The first step undertaken at Wayne State College was the identification of the Steering Committee for the focused visit. The focused visit at Wayne State was only to address the MBA program. The MBA director, a tenured faculty member in the business department, was identified as the Self-Study Coordinator. The other members of the Steering Committee included the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Graduate Dean, the Head of the Division of Business, and the Resource and Data Management Officer.

Clarification of the Purpose for the Focused Visit

After the Steering Committee was formed, the first step was to review the previous NCA Team Report to determine the specific reason for the focused visit. The reason for the visit was clearly identified both in the body of the report and the recommendation section. The Steering Committee also reviewed the "NCA Affiliation Status" document to confirm the reason for the focused evaluation. All of the documents identified the MBA program and the assessment plan for the MBA as the reasons for the focused visit.

Developing an Outline for the Self-Study Process and Document

After the purpose of the focused visit was identified, the Steering Committee decided to develop an outline of the Focused Visit Report. The committee chose to devote a section of the self-study to each of the Criteria for Accreditation. An appendix was included to address the General Institutional Requirements. The organization of the report by the Criteria for Accreditation allowed for a meaningful and thorough review of the MBA program around the Criteria for Accreditation. The self-study process resulted in some changes in our MBA program and administrative processes.

Mechanisms to Include a Variety of Constituencies in the Process

A major concern of the self-study committee was how to involve multiple constituencies in the self-study process, as well as the team visit. First, draft copies of the self-study document were circulated among the Steering Committee, all of the faculty teaching in the MBA program, the President, and the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. Suggestions from all of the constituencies were included in the final report.

Prior to the team visit, the MBA program did not have an advisory council. This was identified as a weakness of our program. In retrospect, the self-study team should have identified an advisory council, circulated a copy of the self-study to the council, and modified our self-study to include their suggestions as well. It would have strengthened both our self-study and our program. Since the team visit the Wayne State College MBA program does have an advisory council. Further input from external constituencies would strengthen any self-study.

Assessment Information Included in the Self-Study

A self-study, whether for a comprehensive evaluation or a focused evaluation, should help the institution improve. The assessment information should help determine the areas for improvement. The self-study process as Wayne State College was aided by an ongoing assessment program that had been providing quality feedback information since its inception.

The assessment process for the MBA program began when the program was developed. The objectives for the program were included with the original proposal submitted to the graduate council. More specific assessment objectives were developed as a part of the College's overall assessment plan in 1992. These assessment objectives were more specific and course-related than the general objective included in the catalog. All the assessment objectives were approved by the MBA committee, and the objectives included in the catalog were approved by the college-wide graduate faculty.

The assessment of the MBA program centers on four areas. First, focus group interviews are conducted with graduates of the program. The focus group interviews take place during the spring semester and include a sample of graduates from all the site locations. The results of these interviews have been very helpful in updating the curriculum included in specific courses, particularly core courses. The feedback from these interviews is shared with the entire MBA committee, the Division of Business Head, Director of the MBA program, and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Second, surveys are sent to students when they graduate from our program, assessing the objectives of the program and at least one objective from each of the core courses. Third, students are asked to have their direct supervisor complete an assessment instrument that addresses some of the changes that should have occurred in the graduate as a result of our program. Because of the nature of the employee supervisor instrument, our response rate on it has not been as high as the graduate instrument. The college was, however, encouraged by the number of responses received. The response rate on the graduate instrument was 60% (15/25) and 36% (9/25) on the supervisor instrument.

Fourth, all students are required to complete and file one graduate paper with the Division of Business and the Graduate Office. The MBA committee decided the most appropriate paper to be written and assessed for our program is a business plan. A business plan seemed to be better suited for our audience than a theoretical or research design paper. The paper is reviewed by a three person sub-committee of the MBA divisional committee. The file paper sub-committee is composed of graduate faculty within the Division who do not teach MBA core courses. It's purpose is to review the file papers, decide whether to accept them, and to make recommendations on the program based upon the quality and content of the papers. All of the assessment information is shared with the entire MBA divisional committee. Thus far, some changes in instructor assignments and course content have been made as a result of assessment information.

Conclusion

The self-study process has resulted in a better MBA program at Wayne State College. The information presented in this paper should provide some advice on how to prepare for a focused visit. It should also allow institutions to identify areas for improvement. The end result of an NCA focused visit should be an institution better serving its constituencies.

For further information concerning the focused visit at Wayne State College please contact Jeryl L. Nelson at jnelson@wscgate.wsc.edu.

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